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. . . But Is It Art? by Joseph Wood Krutch, on page 314


# The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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## The New South

IF that malaise of the restless mind which results in literature is stirring anywhere in the United States it should be in the new South. The South is a box of fireworks awaiting a spark. It has at least three races:—the mountaineer, the lowlander, and the negro. It has at least four cultures:—the negro's, emotional, unmoral, uninhibited except by a sense of inferiority; the rural and mountain white's puritanism, bristling with prejudice; the tradition of chivalry, generous living, and rich social intercourse inherited from the old plantation class; and an empty but persuasive romance of ideals defeated, which, if not precisely a culture, has certainly made a way of living and thinking. The South, too, siconscious of its history, and that is an invaluable asset for literature.

Nothing much happened in the South, intellectually speaking, from Reconstruction to yesterday, but a great deal is happening now. The rapid industrialization of some of the Southern states, and the quick rise of most of them to prosperity, seem to forecast another Middle West, but that is improbable. Industrialism has passed its revolutionary stages in the Middle West. The fiction and poetry that flowed like an oil well when Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Ohio became rich, and then self-conscious, is subsiding. The Middle West is becoming the bank and safe deposit of culture, not its factory and place of origin. There will soon be more good art galleries, more good libraries, more literary clubs, and a wider distribution of interest in things intellectual and esthetic in the Mississippi Valley than anywhere else in the world. But the dynamism of literature does not seem to spring from that soil. The Middle Westerner goes to New York or to Paris, and if he writes of the Middle West, it is of his escape. The Great Valley is too much for him. One might as readily have written of the Roman Empire.

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As for California—California is still too much the Middle West on a holiday to be more than a state of body. The native son has shared the fate of the California Spaniards. We must wait a generation before judging the effect of climate upon the creative mind.

But in the South, all the way round from Virginia to Texas, there is a tension that can be felt. There, if anywhere, are strong racial and regional characteristics diametrically opposed to the levelling influences of prosperous mechanization. There alone in the United States is a society that has been held back because it was poor—and now is growing rich. There are Americans who make their distinctive qualities felt in the most casual contacts, and yet, except for their negroes, have seldom found adequate expression in their books. For the literature of the South has been all genre literature, local color, fanciful rather than imaginative, tending always to sentimental romance, vivid, but neither broad nor deep.

The traveller through the South today sees everywhere signs of rapid industrialization. It is, apparently, being "Americanized," like Europe. But, as the French novelist, Bloch, said many years ago, and Count Keyserling is repeating, the immensely useful things America has to teach Europe can be learned in ten years, whereas a century is not enough for Americans to learn the European control of life. So with the South, which just now is learning with great rapidity the technique of industrialism—the lesson of the use of machines. Greensboro, North Carolina, seems at first glance, a Middle Western town over again, the hotels ditto, the service ditto, the boosting ditto, the prosperity ditto also. But there is a tension not felt elsewhere, and perhaps not at all in the United States since the mechanism of New England met the old guard of Puritan moralism and spirituality, and in the struggle, Massachusetts let Thoreau, Emerson, Hawthorne escape to tell the world a story.

What the South will do is unguessable. It may even become a bad imitation of the Mississippi Valley, less cultivated, less acquisitive, less inventive in material things, but quite as rich.

This seems most improbable. Before the tough-

(*Continued on next page*)

## *The Footfalls*

By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

SOME hear but falls of random feet
Where poets go along the street,
Fierce, self-centered as the stars
Or panthers nosing at their bars.

One who has cheap books to hawk
Keeps his soul out of his talk
And farms it out to spend its breath
With Tristram serenading death.

To think that men who shoulder grain
In dusty sacks can wed with pain
And feel around their common knees
The wash of far, deep agonies!

On the road that time turns under
Prance lightfooted men of thunder,
Ready to put down their hods
And fashion several kinds of gods.

## *This Week*


"Creative Understanding" and "Characters and Events."
Reviewed by RALPH BARTON PERRY.

"Monks Are Monks."
Reviewed by LEE WILSON DODD.

"Harriet Hume."
Reviewed by R. N. LINSCOTT.

"How like a God."
Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.

"The Universe around Us."
Reviewed by JOHN Q. STEWART.

"The Layman Looks at Doctors."
Reviewed by WILLIAM A. WHITE, M.D.

A Plea to the Archbishop.
By WITTER BYNNER.


## *Next Week, or Later*


The Pink Murder Case: A Parody.
By CHRISTOPHER WARD.


## Salvation by Philosophy*

By RALPH BARTON PERRY

HE who is unable to attend the School of Wisdom at Darmstadt may now find consolation in the fact that so far as it is separable from the person of Count Keyserling, Darmstadt has now been brought to America, in two handsome volumes. The "Recovery of Truth" contains the Count's discourses at the "Instructive Meetings" held during the years 1922-27, articles drawn from the School's biennial publication (*The Path toward Perfection*), and critical summaries of the contributions of visiting lecturers, such as Hans Driesch, Max Scheler, Paul Dahlke, Nicolai Arseniew, Count Albert Apponyi, and others. The second volume, "Creative Understanding," consists of more discourses by Count Keyserling, arranged and recast so as to afford the best possible initiation into his philosophy as a whole. In expounding this philosophy one is met with the paradox that in the author's conception true philosophy is inseparable from the philosopher himself, being a sort of lyric cry called forth from his "deeps." To the uninitiated reader, however, this way of conceiving philosophy is itself a philosophy, and of a not unfamiliar type. At the heart of things there is supposed to be a universal spiritual life, which manifests itself in human thought (Logos) and feeling (Eros), and which gives "significance" to their objects.

This life has its differences of level, and the organs of its expression may be near the center or near the periphery, their "truths" being deep or shallow accordingly. The so-called external world is the "expression" of this spiritual life, its externality consisting in the fact that there are *conditions* of expression to which spirit must submit, as the poet must submit to the laws of grammar. The world, in short, is discourse, having on the one hand its meaning, and on the other hand its medium or vehicle. The East (through meditation) has emphasized the inward meaning at the expense of outward expression, while the West (through science) has hitherto been equally one-sided in the opposite sense. The "wisdom" of Darmstadt is to strike the balance, and achieve a synthesis of understanding and action. Modern expressionism is a symptom of the new awakening, but its roots have hitherto lain too near the surface. In fact all cults and cultures are manifestations of spirit, and have therefore their degrees of truth. Their very opposition follows the law of "historic counterpoint," and is necessary to the symphonic whole. Significance reveals itself historically not in compromise, as liberalism and social democracy would have it, but in an alternation of birth and death, a "tension" and "rhythm," which is essentially tragic. It has been left for the present age, however, not to add a new melodic phrase of its own, but to "strike the basic tones for every kind of melody."

It is impossible to criticize a doctrine at once so elusive and so confiding. The thought does not move upon a level of clear distinctions. What, for example, is "significance?" Is it the practical or emotional response which colors the object to which

*CREATIVE UNDERSTANDING. By COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING. New York: Harper & Bros. 1929. $5.
THE RECOVERY OF TRUTH. The same.
CHARACTERS AND EVENTS. By JOHN DEWEY. Edited by JOSEPH RATNER. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1929. $5.

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it is addressed? Or is it the Platonic universal which the eye of the mind discerns behind the particulars of nature and history? The answer is that it is either, as proves convenient; and that it is neither, since to make such distinctions is to analyze, which is beneath the dignity of the philosopher. For the philosopher is an oracle. "It is not the 'what' of a thought that decides, but the 'who' of the man who utters it." The good man knows. His authority is proved to himself by his immediate conviction, and to others by the fact that his utterances produce "the immediate effect of a happy elucidation of what everybody feels as real and right in the depths of his heart." It is evident that such a claim is made in behalf of the prophet of Darmstadt. It is *his* rôle to sound the note by which others shall tune their instruments, and then to conduct them, "according to the rules of the art of spiritual orchestration."

But Darmstadt is devoted to training and rehearsal rather than to concerts. What the age needs is a deepening of meaning and self-expression. This cannot be taught in the ordinary sense, for it consists in "being" rather than in "ability." The "new and profounder type of man" can be produced only by the quickening effect of example and suggestion, or by a sort of recrystallization directly communicated from a new centre of polarization. That there is at least one such centre in Darmstadt is no secret.

Thus to present oneself to America as a "qualified personality" requires high courage, for it leaves the public no option but to worship him or to laugh at him; and as between the two, Americans are thought to be most readily disposed to laughter. How can a man who refers to the "vitalizing possibilities embodied in his person," who admits that his "Travel Diaries" could equally well have been written at home, who claims to possess "the organ requisite for the immediate awareness of realities" which other persons "can conceive only by way of ratiocination," and to be able to apprehend "spontaneously" the genius of any country which he visits,—who says that he has never learned anything from the intellectual and the pious, who casually compares his "mission" with that of Socrates and Marcus Aurelius,—how can such a man as that command a respectful hearing in America, as no doubt he does? The case is aggravated by the fact that this self-appointed sage writes badly. He takes no trouble to spare his reader. He is wordy and tedious, wholly without humor, repetitious, and slovenly. He invites the jaded reader to make good his own defects of style, and to read his complete works in the hope that he may then return and discover the meaning of the unintelligible parts. There is, it is true, occasional sageness in this sage; there are nuggets of shrewd comment on history and on contemporary life. But the ore is not rich and the cost of smelting out the precious metal makes the profit doubtful.

The fact is there is no explanation of the author's vogue unless he is correct in at least one thing,—in his belief, namely, that in this age of transition the world is eager for a prophet, and is willing to give the benefit of the doubt to any man who wears a portentous aspect. For Count Keyserling succeeds somehow in creating about him a hush of expectancy. He draws into himself all of the gospels of all time, from Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity to Coudism, psycho-analysis, relativity, and psychical research, and borrows from them an air of importance that is as venerable as the most ancient tradition and as modern as the latest bulletin from the Weather Bureau.

To turn from Keyserling to Dewey is like passing from the dark interior of a cathedral or magician's cave to the garish light of city streets. There is a loss of solemnity, but the air and the visibility are better. Dewey's "Characters and Events" is by no means a restatement of his philosophy, unless, as one sometimes suspects, it should be characteristic of his particular philosophy to be unrecognizable as such. The present volumes contain some hundred short articles contributed for the most part to popular magazines and weeklies. Read singly they impress the reader as the miscellaneous observations of a "correspondent" who, going about the world with open eyes, a well-informed mind, and a humane interest, has written down what at the moment occurred to him. But when one reviews the whole one notes that Professor Dewey has been sensitized by a few leading ideas. The "characters" whom he treats, such as Emerson, Whitman, Maeterlinck, and James, have been appraised by the standard of democracy. In China and Japan his attention has been attracted to such "events" as he finds to be manifestations of liberalism. Turkey and Russia have interested him as social experiments, to be viewed with hopeful tolerance. America and the war are judged by all three of those ideas. A further review discloses even in these scattered and fragmentary utterances, an essential and characteristic attitude. The best epitome of it is to be found in the address published in 1917 under the title of "Social Psychology and Social Progress." Man is fundamentally social, and his life is fundamentally technological. Hitherto human "control" through science has been limited to physical nature. The hope of the future lies in the possibility of gaining a like control of human nature through the advance and application of psychology. A psychology which is to yield such a result must be a psychology which regards the "mind" of man as a product of the working of social relations upon a few native biological tendencies. Man is made by the society in which he lives, but through science he can remake that society and so indirectly remake himself. Progress must be sought, therefore, in an experimental social reconstruction. The present volumes add nothing to this doctrine, but they illustrate its application, and they reveal the author. They are without distinction of style, and it is doubtful if they will now find many readers. For their very timeliness, or appropriateness to the "concrete occasions" for which they were designed, gives them, even a few years later, a certain flavor of obsoleteness. But they manifest the qualities which have won Professor Dewey so wide and so attentive a hearing. Their very stylelessness conveys an impression of directness and unreserved sincerity. They are profoundly unpretentious. Their obscurity is often an effect of the author's freshness of thinking, or reflects the honest doubts and complications of the subject. The author is revealed as the friend of mankind, and as one who has the courage to commit himself from day to day on each day's issues. When others take refuge in formulas and abstract generalizations, he undertakes the kind of thinking that is most difficult, the solution, namely, of a problem of action and constructive policy.

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The antithesis of Keyserling and Dewey is a tempting theme. Keyserling emphasizes self-expression, Dewey environmental control and verification. The first would have us ponder the meaning of things, the second would have us believe and try. Keyserling is sabbatarian, esoteric, apocalyptic, and edifying,—Dewey work-a-day, exoteric, colloquial, and matter of fact. The one recommends psychoanalysis and personal regeneration, the other intelligent organization. These are the evident differences that divide them. At the same time there is something less evident that unites them, something more important than the fact that they both travel widely and write voluminously. They agree that the world needs philosophy, and that this saving philosophy cannot be that attempt to be scientific about ultimate things which commonly calls itself philosophy. In the last essay in the present volumes (on "Philosophy and Democracy") Professor Dewey tells us that philosophy not only has in all epochs unwittingly "expressed," but should in the future consciously express, "differences of interest and purpose," different "moral convictions," different "ideals of collective good life." When the scientific intellect has finished its task there remain the questions "What is it all about? "What does it all mean?" "What am I to do about it?" "Conviction" on these matters is "wisdom," and the defense of such wisdom of intellectual methods is the task of philosophy. Here is not only the Darmstadt vocabulary,—"expression," "meaning," and "wisdom," but in some measure the Darmstadt idea. For here, too, philosophy is essentially a spontaneous utterance, proved in the first instance to him who utters it by the warmth of conviction which accompanies it. And here too the inward conviction is tested and limited by the scientific knowledge of nature, which prescribes the terms of its effective expression. Thus for Dewey democracy is first of all a conviction, springing from within his American mind. Thereupon his critical scientific mind discovers whether "the structure of the world" is consistent with it,—whether "it is sanctioned and sustained by the nature of things." Science makes this discovery through providing mechanisms by which the ideal is carried into effect. If it *can* be carried into effect, there is the end of the matter, so far as its justification is concerned. Keyserling, though he betrays a poor opinion of democracy that is contrary to his usual large-mindedness, is bound to say much the same thing. If the meaning of democracy can be expressed in the language of nature and institutions, then it rightly takes its place in the world of spiritual creations. For Keyserling and Dewey alike neither democracy nor any other like ideal can have any exclusive or final claims. It merely takes its turn until some other effectually expressed ideal displaces it. Judgments of better and best are relative to some such ideal assumed as a standard;—and between such ideals there can be no rational preference. Keyserling, to be sure, *affirms* an absolute standard. Specific ideals, as we have seen, express the underlying "significance" and express it more or less "deeply" or "profoundly." But as this standard remains unformulated, it amounts to no more than a pious belief that all ideals are caught up and harmonized in some eternal concert. In Dewey this metaphysical substructure is omitted, and each collective aspiration remains an episode in a level stream of change; commending itself to its own votaries, but impotent to prove itself to rival sects or to a disinterested spectator. That such a thorough-going relativism apparently occasions its author no qualms is evidence of his healthy-mindedness and tolerance. But it will satisfy neither the old-fashioned philosopher nor the plain man, if such there be, who sees the point.

# A Psychobiograph

MONKS ARE MONKS, A DIAGNOSTIC SCHERZO. By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1929.

Reviewed by LEE WILSON DODD

IN "Monks Are Monks" Mr. George Jean Nathan has hit upon a fairly amusing device for stitching together a large number of his characteristic monologues on contemporary life. Miss Lorinda Hope's persistent but vain pursuit of one literary male after another very neatly enables Mr. Nathan to assume a series of transparent masks and go right on talking through them for three hundred pages. It is not precisely the same thing as talking through one's hat, though the devices are analogous. Whether wisdom is much served by Mr. Nathan's loquacity is no longer with me an open question; yet I hasten to reassure his faithful admirers, including a majority of this country's undergraduates, that he still, from time to time, provides the expected noisy display of Giant Crackers, Catherine Wheels, and Bengal Lights.

Being unduly sensitive to noise and confusion, it is always a little difficult for me to cling to the thread of Mr. Nathan's argument; it is as if I lost consciousness now and then—briefly, of course. Therefore, I dare not insist upon my impression, though I rather think he is still pretty well convinced that we Americans are a nation of boobs. No doubt there is a good deal to be said for this observation; and, if so, I am certain that Mr. Nathan must have amplified it somewhere. It is a rationalized point of view, however, that would be more convincing if applied at large to the human race. But let us not be captious. Mr. Nathan has overemphasized many a good thing in his time. As for example, in the present volume:

> "I shall interest myself more greatly in the doctrine of general free speech," announced Morton, "when more than half a dozen men in any country seem to have something to say that is worth saying under any circumstances at any time or in any place."

Yes, I like that; I like it very much. It is so delightfully apposite.

# The New South

(*Continued from preceding page*)

minded mountaineer becomes a robot he is likely to go through interesting phases, and his individualism should outlast present tendencies toward a socialistic uniformity. Before Southern ideals of life as something to be handled graciously, with personal dignity, and a willingness to please, are absorbed into salesmanship, there is likely to be spiritual stocktaking. Life in a society given over to production is not so attractive that communities with different memories have only to see it in order to imitate. This sudden promotion to the status of a country that the stock market takes seriously is a test as to whether the South is really different. And the answer will be first seen in literature.

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# Capricious Allegory

HARRIET HUME. By REBECCA WEST. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by R. N. LINSCOTT

OUR novelists grow fantastic. A spinster mounts a broomstick. A lady turns into a fox. Orlando swims for four centuries own the river of time. And now Rebecca West, uthor of two sober novels and much wise and witty riticism, produces a tiptoe fantasy that fairly cries or a Philo Vance to unriddle its hidden allegory.

Harriet Hume—sprightly name—is a thistle-own creature of soft, fair hues and lightness and race; perpetually skipping, tripping, dancing, run-ing, tittering, scampering, swooning. She is a mu-ician and dwells obscurely in one corner of a state-y old mansion in Kensington. As the book opens, he is coming down from her chamber with her over, Arnold Condorex, a lowly youth but ambi-ious. Suddenly, a miracle! She can read his mind s though it were her own. To confirm her gift he tells him every shadow of a thought that drifts hrough it while he lounges in the library and she nakes tea in the kitchen. Alas, she sees also, deep lown in his brain, a hankering to leave her for omeone more capable of furthering his ambition. At this he is aggrieved, holding it less than fair hat a creature so close, so loving, should reveal in nim treacheries which he would not admit even to nimself. His farewell is polite but decisive.

Ten years later they meet again. Arnold's rise o fame has outrun his hopes. His talents as nego-iator have found scope in the foreign office. His florid asseverations of righteousness have convinced not only the electors but himself. Benign in the knowledge of his present eminence and his future preëminence he comes to Harriet condescendingly and finds her in no way changed. How entrancing are her pussy-cat graces, how enchanting her mouse-like squeaks of delight. To his gracious inquiries she replies, "Write me down as all that Arnold Condorex rejected." But when he makes merry over her half-forgotten pretense of reading his mind, she tells him plainly that he is at that mo-ment scheming to marry Lord Sourdeline's daugh-ter, although the girl is betrothed to his friend, Lord Ladyday. Thereupon he leaves her in great anger since that was a plan he had resolutely shut out from his own thoughts that it might seem unpremedi-ated even to himself.

When next they meet, Arnold Condorex is in he Cabinet and scheming (of course from the ighest motives) to cast down the older men through whose kind offices he had risen to power. Over-aking Harriet on the street, and finding her still the dear fool," he must take her to see his great house n Portland Place, with its twelve servants and its ecorations by the Adam Brothers. There, after loving scene, they fall out, as they seem fated to o. Under his uneasy urgings, she tells him that uilt and shame and treachery are his attendants nd that disgrace waits upon the stairs. Indignant nat she should thus unmask him to himself, he rives her from the house, crying out that she is is opposite and can read his thoughts merely by nagining the antithesis of her own.

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Harriet Hume spoke truly. Condorex is bank-pt in money, in fame, in place. On the eve of he announcement of his ruin, he slips a pistol into is pocket and goes forth to take Harriet's life, for seems to him that by making his downward steps onscious, she has made them inevitable. "The lion an live in safety with the lamb cropping the lawn ot half a mile away, until the mawkish smell of her herbivorousness seeks him down the wind and draws him to her by its insult to his difference; and her terrible meek breath on his fierce muzzle posits a relationship and makes him her murderer." He strides distraught through the London parks unable to recall the reason, feeling himself lost in time as he is in the material world. Arriving at Harriet's house, he aims his pistol at her through a crevice in the blinds, but as he pauses to savour his easy tri-umph two policemen clasp hands on his shoulders and Harriet appears to tell him that it is her duty not to die.

What is he to do? He cannot, the policemen say, walk the streets for he would frighten people out of their wits. He must not, Harriet tells him, go back to his great house in Portland Place for there is one there who has had an accident with a pistol. Nor can she receive him at the moment since she has herself but just returned from a very touching ceremony and her house is not in order. However, if he will but wait a moment, she will put things to rights. As he loiters with the police-men, who, it seems, are both long dead, the garden seethes with the sound of growing leaves and burst-ing buds. Spring has come, he is no longer lost in time, and the officers, as they leave, wish them both a pleasant eternity.

Reading "Harriet Hume" you are chiefly con-scious of the crisp, mannered style; reflecting upon it, of the pattern that the author has so plainly in-dicated, so sedulously hidden. Is this elaborate fan-tasy sheer creative vitality like the carvings of a medieval church, or allegory of the kind that dis-mays the student a century after when edited with an inch of text to an ell of notes? In "The Strange Necessity," Miss West brilliantly developed

Jacket design for "Harriet Hume."

the theory that the function of art for the world at large, like the function of the cortex in the indi-vidual, is to select and integrate the significant ele-ments of experience. Somewhere in this essay, she states that the artist, dealing as he does with un-controllable human material, must circumvent its tendencies to falsehood by his power to project him-self through fantasy into the minds of others; also that the man without art will be "without a guide to see that he lives, instead of performing those dis-ordered fantasies of conduct that in no way arrest death," and finally that art is the property of all who are aware of it. Is it possible that "Harriet Hume" is a laboratory demonstration of this theory, with Harriet (a musician who had many lovers), and Condorex (a statesman conscious only of the tangible world) dimly personifying art and art-less humanity? The bewildered reviewer, as he tramples through these gossamer webs, can only comfort himself with the assurance that if there is a rich and intricate pattern, it cannot be wholly successful unless it is visible to the Average Reader among whom he has by now scarcely the temerity to include himself.

After all, "Harriet Hume" is primarily a novel, and must be judged by its whole power to excite and interest rather than by the deftness of its sub-sidiary symbolism. Harriet herself has the inhu-man loveliness of a pizzicato passage on a violin. She is as extravagantly alive and completely two di-mensional as the shadow of leaves blown against a wall. Condorex is curiously unsubstantial as though the author had meant to show him half formed or blurred like a rough draft of humanity in the mass. Either his outlines should have been sharper or his appearances shorter. As it is his mounting fame synchronizes with the reader's mounting boredom.

But if the pattern is somewhat dim and the figures sometimes wan, the style has Harriet's own elfin grace:—

> Then she whisked her skirts towards the mantelpiece, where there were still two tall vases full of the flowers that had been given to her at her last concert, took out a rosebud, ran to him, snapped the long stalk, and set it in his buttonhole, and went back and found another for her bosom. And there at the hearth she came to rest, her rose-colored nail toying with the nail-colored rose, the involved wrist as finely turned as one would have been led to suppose from the carriage of her head (which supported a Grecian knot as hardly another head in a million) and the stance of her feet (of which one was turned out as far as could be while the other rested behind it on the very point of the toe as if she were a little girl at her dancing-class); while her other arm lay like a rod of spirally rounded ivory along the mantelpiece. It was not a pity that her gown took the shade of China tea on the side of the curtained windows and the shade of pearls on the side where daylight had its way.
>
> . . . He had the intense black gaze and the dark plumi-ness of brows, beetling much for so young a man, that are the very thing, as one has seen in a hundred prints, for think-ing about politics in a park under thunderclouds; and he had to a T that ample, marbly Romanness of profile which would make them think he had written his speech in the library of his palace, beneath the cold eyes of the third earl and a bust of Cicero.

Particularly delicious are the scenes of pure fantasy; the headless sheep herded by the Adam Brothers through the London streets; the three fabulous ladies bearing a great festoon of flowers down the stairs of the mansion in Portland Place as a prophecy of doom. In spite, however, of the constant neat-ness of phrase and richness of imagery, the style has a little too much of a spun sugar fragility to carry without surfeit through a whole novel, and there are times when its involute efflorescence sug-gests the baroque art of a birthday cake. But after all, it is an esthetic Morality Play with puppet per-formers that we have witnessed, and if the marion-ettes are graceful and charming and brightly painted, we may go home reasonably content.

# A Modern Hamlet

HOW LIKE A GOD. By REX STOUT. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, how moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehen-sion how like a god!

IN choosing as the title of his mordant work the phrase from "Hamlet," Mr. Stout presum-ably had more in mind than obvious irony. His melancholy hero with the utterly futile life was probably meant to be typical of humanity or a large part of it. At any rate, whether so meant or not, there is much that is typical about him. Futile heroes are, of course, no great threat, today; but this one manages to be not only futile but interesting. Outwardly, as treasurer of and one of the largest stockholders in the Carr Corporation—an organiza-tion apparently something like the Bethlehem Steel Company—he leads a sufficiently successful life. His name would certainly appear in "Who's Who in America"; it might even be considered for the "Dictionary of American Biography." Inwardly, he is much akin to Hamlet, an irresolute dreamer with a tortured idealism that feeds upon itself. The book is the record of a long, slow suicide.

Imagine Hamlet as an American business man! What would happen to him? (Here one recalls a popular modern interpretation of Hamlet which rep-resents him as being, like Bruce Barton's Jesus, es-sentially just that, an extravert and typical man of action! Let Hamlet pass then. Rex Stout's Will Sidney, at any rate, is a dreamer and an introvert.) What happens to him is the sort of thing likely to happen to his ilk in the modern world. Dominated from the beginning by women, he is ruled in child-hood by an older sister, seduced in youth by a woman older than himself, and governed in manhood by a society wife whose lubricity is such that he does not dare to bring a friend home to his house. Too weak of will to become the writer he wished to be, he allows himself to be pushed into an uncongenial business which affords no outlet for his imagination but sends him back for that to women, ever women. The end comes at last in a savage passion for an illiterate, dirty wanton whose wiry fascination writhes like a snake through the later pages of the book. Repeatedly betrayed by her, he finally deter-mines upon her murder not so much out of revenge as out of his desperate need once to assert himself and dominate his world. Fate almost grants him this one moment—almost but not quite. His last cup contains only the dregs of all that have been drunk before.

However able the psychological treatment, to make such a record of long passivity grip the atten-tion is a task of no little difficulty. Mr. Stout has chosen to meet this difficulty by a technical device which is exceedingly interesting. The story, told in the first person, represents the thoughts which pass

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through Sidney's mind as he slowly mounts the stairs to his last meeting with his mistress. Past, present, and future are thus jumbled together and only gradually become disentangled for the reader. Meanwhile the suspense becomes almost intolerable; we have learned on the first page of the matter that Sidney has in hand; chapter after chapter, the murderer draws nearer to his victim; yet we are doubtful of the outcome until the end. It is stated on good authority that this is Mr. Stout's first novel; otherwise one could never have believed it.

## The Heavens Above

THE UNIVERSE AROUND US. By Sir James Jeans. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1929. $4.

Reviewed by John Q. Stewart
Princeton University

LIGHT-CENTURIES away is a star which a reader may possess for the asking. Fifteen hundred million separate stars are countable, with the Mt. Wilson telescope,—a star apiece for every terrestrial human being. For every star seen there are believed to be faint scores unseen, still within the boundaries of the Milky Way; and beyond are the spiral nebulæ, island universes, each comparable with it in size.

"The Universe Around Us," an extraordinary book by an extraordinary author for the ordinary reader, affords the most useful prospectus available of this unexploited but not unexplored real estate. An apartment-dweller may turn to page 60 and choose a star in a cluster. Lovers will find on page 210 binary systems under construction. Who seeks the open spaces may stake his claim on an outlying sun with a frontage of some trillion square miles facing the extra-gallactic nebulæ. Seekers of publicity will select the largest stars, the smallest, the hottest, the fastest, the nearest, and stars with peculiar spectra.

Clear night sky, undimmed by artificial city lights with their artificial significance, is non-negotiable. It is not delivered between the covers of a book. Yet if the reader addressed in this book, "with no special scientific knowledge," apply himself to grasping a fraction of the information attractively set forth, he will with freshened interest turn his eyes to the stars.

More than twenty excellent plates, principally beautiful photographs of nebulæ, enable him to study phenomena which only great telescopes and superior technique have brought within our ken. Its wealth of facts makes the book not easy to assimilate, but its clarity could hardly have been surpassed. Who lacks scientific knowledge adds presumption to his ignorance if he seeks to overcome the latter without mental growing pains.

The text begins with a brief and rather unsatisfactory account of Galileo's pioneer use of the telescope. That physicist-astronomer-satirist is a figure of as great significance as any in modern times, and his story ought to be retold in modern color, not again in the simple white and blacks of nineteenth century scientific piety.

With Chapter I, Exploring the Sky, Sir James Jeans is away on his cosmic quest. We follow, flashing through the solar system, mapping the Milky Way, classifying the nebulæ, pacing with astronomical-unit boots the distances to the stars, photographing, weighing, estimating brightnesses, measuring velocities of tens of kilometers per second by applying a millimeter scale to spectrograms, determining the sizes of binary stars so indiscreet as to eclipse one another and thus to reveal secrets which the huge stellar majority hold inviolate. We surprisingly sound remote reaches of space through an acquaintance with Cepheids and novæ. The island universes draw us ever outward until the mathematicians, distrustful of Euclidean geometry, confusedly predict that our straight path will lead around to earth again.

Chapter II explores the atom: passing in across the M ring of electrons the going becomes if anything more rough. Chapter III explores in time. For two billion years since its birth gravitation has swung the cradled earth around the sun; it is still in its babyhood, among the heavenly citizenry of stars that have endured a thousand billion years. Matter melts away to energy that these may shine with their differing glory.

Chapter IV offers an authentic substitute or supplement for Genesis i. The primordial universal undifferentiated chaos, generated perhaps from light of superlative frequency, having a density of 10.30 grams per cubic centimeter, condensed ten thousand times ten thousand times ten thousand years ago to form the unreckoned millions of great nebulæ, our galaxy one among them. Those which possessed appreciable angular momentum rotated more rapidly as they contracted. Plate XVI illustrates the sequence.

Stars began to form in the nebulæ by further condensation. Planets only appeared under the exceedingly unusual circumstance of an encounter between two stars. There are not, consequently, a vast number of earths spread about in space, although there may be many.

Chapter V tells more about stars, much more—about their surfaces and their cores and their presumed life-history. Chapter VI discusses "Beginnings and Endings." The expectation is that astronomical conditions will favor terrestrial life *a further million million years*. Interpreted in terms of time the message of astronomy is "one of almost endless possibility and hope."

Among dangerous uncertainties, however, is this one.—The sun is perilously near to the left-hand edge of the main sequence, on the Russell diagram. If it were to become 0.03 magnitude fainter, it would slide, according to Jeans, over the edge and contract precipitantly to the white-dwarf stage. Its radiation would then be so slight that the oceans would solidify, and the atmosphere would liquify.

"The Universe Around Us" is worthy of its subject. Man examined by mechanistic philosophy through the glass of physical science is less than an ant on a grain of sand in a wilderness of sand. He is more while any men can say, "Our Father's are the nebulæ."

## Physician, Heal Thyself

THE LAYMAN LOOKS AT DOCTORS. By S. W. and J. T. Pierce. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1929. $2.

Reviewed by William A. White, M. D.
St. Elizabeth's Hospital

NO single adjective will adequately describe this book. It is both true and false, humorous and tragic, and is calculated to arouse either a feeling of hopefulness or one of hopelessness, depending upon the emotional pattern with which the reader approaches it. It would seem that the book would have its greatest value—and after all, values are what we are interested in in books as well as other things—if it were read with a spirit of tolerance and an effort to understand the significance of its message.

The story is the story of a young woman who has led a rather uneventful life up to the time of her marriage, a life which if reduced to the paragraphs of a case history would be significant principally because of its lack of interest and its lack of any high lights or deep shadows. It was a life of more or less uneventful, rather serene happiness. The only indication that there might have been something beneath the surface was the recurrent disability of one of her arms, which was usually attributed to neuritis. Following her marriage and just as she is leaving on a steamer on her honeymoon she collapses completely, has to be taken ashore, and it is at this point that the story starts.

There begins what turns out to be an almost endless series of consultations with various physicians and residence in first one and then another sanitarium or nursing home. There are brought upon the stage all sorts of physicians with all sorts of theories and all sorts of methods, not to say also with all sorts of personalities: men who are well trained, sincere, patient, and one might almost add dumb, men who are accustomed to practice among the rich and to charge high fees and who felt called upon apparently to exploit their wares in an exclusive fashion, one man who was obviously sadistically cruel, another who was equally obviously sensual, the neurologist, the psychiatrist, the internist,—all of them had their go at the problems presented by this young woman; and although it seems in cold print here in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-nine to be almost incredible yet practically none of these men ever paid any attention, or at least any real attention, as we would say today, to her mental symptoms, although the case was an obviously mental one, and none by the most refined analysis and most careful probing and the use of the most elaborate tests was ever able to find anything physical the matter with this young patient. The methods of procedure were every one of them stupid to the extreme, one might say, if one were disposed not to be tolerant and understanding.

It is necessary to have lived through the development of this aspect of medicine in order to realize how it is possible that a whole army of diagnosticians should have so unanimously avoided the real issues in such a case. It seems almost as if they must have done so intentionally because they took so much pains not to see any psychological significance in the symptoms. However, like all good stories this has a happy ending. The patient comes into the care finally, and as usual with the opposition of everybody concerned—parents, physicians, and nurse—of a psychoanalyst, who apparently is an intelligent, commonsense sort of individual. Even here, in order perhaps that the dramatic requirements of the story may be preserved, she almost fails. She is unable to follow along with the treatment. She has negative transference symptoms, matters do not progress, and she is all for throwing it over and the family are all with her when at the last moment she is saved, continues the treatment, and makes a good recovery, and then finally—and this is one of the best parts of the book—she very briefly and very simply describes her symptomatology and how the analysis gave it a meaning.

From the reviewer's point of view this book is most interesting and ought to be a valuable contribution to the lay literature of psychogenic disorders. Just what effect it actually will have upon people is, as was suggested in the opening part of this review, problematical because dependent upon the emotional pattern with which the story is approached. Handed to the right sort of person with the proper introduction by the proper person it ought to be a work productive of understanding, and therefore the reviewer is very much inclined to commend it because of its possibilities in helping to a larger appreciation of the nature of mental illnesses and their possibilities of expression in all sorts of physical symptoms which disguise their real origin.

A word of caution, to conclude, which may be unnecessary but can do no harm. All of the various physicians with whom this young woman consulted were men who occupied envious positions in their profession. They were well educated, well trained, well backgrounded in their specialty, and, at least for the most part, were sincere, believed that what they said was so, and that what they did was the best that could be done. The fault is not with them—probably it is not a question of fault at all. Enlightenment comes slowly in this world and it does not illumine all at the same time, and it travels only by certain pathways. Aside from the reasons why the book may be valuable as indicated above, it may also have value as indicating that the whole field of medicine as it exists today as taught in the medical schools almost completely ignores the types of problems that are discussed by these authors. With all due consideration for the already overburdened medical student, it nevertheless does seem that the time has come when it is no longer possible to go on teaching medicine and graduating physicians without recognizing, in some reasonable way at least, the part that the mind plays in the human organism in general and in particular in the symptomatology of illness.

Stockholm rumor has been busy with the names of Dreiser and Thomas Mann as possible winners of this year's Nobel prize for literature. The Swedish Academy, however, which makes the decision, has been maintaining its usual secrecy. The literary prize this year amounts to a larger sum than at any previous time, owing to the higher yield of the Nobel Foundation's investments, in Swedish securities.

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# BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

## Chinese Poems

IMAGES IN JADE: Translations from Classical and Modern Chinese Poetry. By ARTHUR CHRISTY. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1929. $3.50.

Reviewed by FLORENCE AYSCOUGH
Translator of "Tu Fu"

IN an opening chapter Mr. Christy explains "how this book came to be" and its genesis accounts for the somewhat fortuitous nature of the selections from Chinese poetry it contains. The author, son of a missionary, has retained a great interest in the country of his birth and as a teacher of English literature has found that the discussion of Chinese poems provides a key to sympathetic intercourse with young Chinese in America. This volume contains a selection of poems originally made, not for publication, but in the interest of this same discussion.

In the second chapter, headed "Methods of a Chinese Poet," Mr. Christy touches also on modes of translation; citing the one used by Miss Louise Hammond, and that adapted by Miss Lowell and myself as exemplifying two extremes of method, he himself declares for "a middle course."

It must at the outset be granted that certain elements of Chinese poetry are untranslatable. A poem written in five or seven ideographic monosyllables to the line, rendered in a syllabic language, might read, as far as form is concerned:

*cat, dog,* pig and *hen*
all are *friends of* men

and even so the form is incomplete; the question of tone is still ignored. The words in italics would in Chinese be in the *tsê* or "oblique" tone, the others in the *p'ing* or "level." Nor are the Chinese monosyllables as simple as ours. Ideographs are exceedingly complicated in their make-up, and the elements used in combination modify the sense. My Chinese teacher once said, when I was puzzling over a rendering: "Why do you try to find one word? It is made up of three!"

Miss Hammond's method of translating *tz'û,* which are chanted to a definite rhyme tune, is to give each line in five or seven English syllables which she has set to music. The effect is entrancing, and brings over the sound of Chinese poetry in a magical way, but these exquisite little ghosts can hardly be called translations. Miss Lowell and I, in "Fir-Flower Tablets," abandoning all thought of form, concentrated upon bringing over the Chinese thought *and idiom.* To us the important points were, "What does the poet say? How does he say it?" Mr. Christy seems to feel that individual interpretation should be added. He quotes a long Chinese commentary, to a poem by Mêng Hoa-jan, which exemplifies the detail Chinese commentators consider necessary to impart to their readers, and himself adds to the body of the poem in translation some of the meanings which he reads into it. A dangerous method, as readings differ. Take the poem by Wang Wei on page 38. The text, which has five characters to the line, reads:

*Passing Heaped Fragrance Monastery*
*Have not known Heaped Fragrance Monastery,*
*(Have travelled) many* li *(and have reached) entering clouds peak.*
*Old trees; no men pass-by*
*Deep in hills; what place bell?*
*Sound of waterfall reverberates (from) dangerous cliffs,*
*Sun's color (under) green pines is cold.*

*Sunset is fading by the winding waters above the world,*
*Peace the practice of abstraction restrains the poisonous dragons.*

The last line contains an allusion to a story too long to quote. Mr. Christy translates as follows:

*On Passing Toward The Monastery*

*I had not known before the location of the monastery of Heaped Fragrance,*
*But I have travelled many* li *and reached the cloud-covered mountain top.*
*Here are old trees no human beings have ever touched.*
*I wonder where the tones of that bell come from?*
*The roar of the waterfall calls to the dangerous stones.*
*Where the sun still shines the green pines appear cool;*
***And all seems the more holy in the approaching twilight.***
*I do not wonder the abbot is able to overcome poisonous dragons.*

There is scant authority for these amplifications of the text; however, Mr. Christy is perfectly correct when he states in his Foreword "the reader (must be) a human Æolian harp delicately catching the notes which the poet releases, and in turn rendering them again into the music and harmony of a mellow experience."

Useful biographies accompany the selections and the book closes with eighteen poems by Mr. Lum Chung Pak, who "is able to write in both English and Chinese." Mr. Christy considers these poems "interesting evidence of the influence the Occidental has in turn had on a Chinese poet." The influence is all too strong. The following line occurs in a poem describing a Chinese river:

*The farmers homeward bring their plodding herds.*

It suggests a picture immortalized by an English poet but essentially non-Chinese. A people who eat but little meat; a people who never drink milk, do not keep "plodding herds."

It is very puzzling to find the name of the noted traveler Chang Ch'ien, who lived during the Han dynasty in the second century before our era, given as the author of four poems in the T'ang style. Moreover, his name is not one that I have ever seen mentioned in connection with Chinese poetry, which shortly after his death evolved from the "ancient" style into the "classical"; it seems probable therefore that some confusion in names has arisen and that the poems quoted are not by the traveler, but by one of the innumerable T'ang poets.

## Roman Catholicism

THE CATHOLIC-PROTESTANT MIND. By CONRAD HENRY MOEHLMAN. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by BERNARD IDDINGS BELL
St. Stephen's College

IT is often the best-meant books which irritate the most. Dr. Moehlman, a professor in the Baptist theological college at Rochester, New York, has intended to write a book which would bring Catholics and Protestants to a better mutual understanding. Its effect will probably be to vex the Catholics and to encourage the Protestants even further to misunderstand the Catholics. This missing of the mark seems chiefly to be due to Dr. Moehlman's apparent lack of such historical perspective as might enable him to see Catholicism in focus. There are in the book instances of unquestioned assent to popular Protestant assumptions which are not in accord with historical fact, such as, for example, the following: the author says, quite rightly, that the Roman Church is not forever unchanging and the same; that it develops with the years.

There is nothing new in that. John Henry Newman once wrote a famous essay elaborately maintaining it. But Dr. Moehlman further assumes that this development has been from medieval rigidity to modern flexibility—from intellectual slavery to a growing freedom of opinion. The case is almost exactly the opposite. There was vast intellectual freedom in the medieval Church. Dr. Moehlman has himself enumerated many cases of this, among them the differences of opinion between Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, and their schools. It was with the "revival of learning" that the Inquisition came into being; this Renaissance intolerance, among Christians of every sort, was at least partly parent to the Reformation; the Reformation both forced and colored the Counter-Reformation; and contemporary Roman Catholicism is permeated through and through with the logical rigidity of the Council of Trent. Of all this, the commonplace of ecclesiastical history of the shrewder sort, Dr. Moehlman seems not to have heard.

Sometimes, also, our author indulges in sweeping, dogmatic, and *ex cathedra* pronouncements. He is not puzzled in the least, for example, by the history, so baffling to others, of the first century development of Christian institutions. He dismisses the whole problem with the statement, "Jesus did not organize a Church." The Biblical evidence is against such an opinion, and the other evidence is dubious; but our author has no doubts whatever. Possibly he has access to information hidden as yet from other scholars. Students of architecture, too, will be surprised to learn that "the medieval Christian architect placed a cross upon the steeples of churches to ward off the lightning." Incidentally, he seems to think that steeples are typical of medieval construction. And when he says sweepingly, "The public school needs no defense," serious educators will gasp. The public school is being ruthlessly and continuously self-criticized. It definitely does need defense, and it always will.

The title is misleading. The hyphenated adjective leads the reader to expect a treatment of possible Catholic-Protestant comprehension and integration. Little or nothing of that sort is really attempted. There are a dozen better books on modern Roman Catholicism than this one. Neither in matter nor style does the volume possess distinction.

## Airgraphics

THE STORY OF THE WEATHER. By EUGENE VAN CLEEF. New York: The Century Company. 1929. $3.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER MCADIE
Harvard University

SEVERAL books intended for the laity on the subject of weather have lately been issued. Doubtless the rapid development of aviation has something to do with the present output although, of course, the subject is a never-failing, always-uppermost topic of general conversation. The author of this "Story of the Weather" is Professor of Geography in the Ohio State University and is qualified by some years of service in the Weather Bureau and a long familiarity with the routine and demands of such a position, to expound to the average inquirer, in a simple, straightforward way the mechanism of what has been well called "the ceaseless making and unmaking of weather."

At the outset he acknowledges the complexities (and he might have added perplexities) of the subject and the limitations of our knowledge. He deals only with what may be called ordinary weather, passing over unusual, freakish, and abnormal conditions. Perhaps it is the part of wisdom to do so in a book of this character; but most of us in greater or less degree crave explanations of the dramatic and phenomenal. For example, why should a West Indian hurricane, headed straight for Miami, hesitate, change course, and finally swerve south, to hurry across the Gulf and recurve five hundred miles west of where experienced forecasters with all available data would have anticipated? Or why should heavy rains cause the Thames to flood London one season, while in another, even as these words are written, there has been no rain in that city for thirty-seven consecutive days, almost, but not quite, breaking a century's record?

In scientific work we are always readjusting and constructing afresh; and nowhere else is this more true than in the field of Airgraphics, a more appropriate name for the physics and thermo-dynamics of the atmosphere than Meteorology.

Professor Van Cleef holds that every household should have a barometer as well as a thermometer. He instances the Stormoguide and would have some form of aneroid with attachment, serviceable for forecasting, placed in every home. This would have its benefits, for when the wind blew from a certain quarter, precautionary signals might be displayed and thus domestic equanimity preserved. In California, the old Spanish saw is often quoted, "A wise man will not argue when the north wind blows."

The spirit in which the book is written is best exemplified in Chapter VI, which describes at length the *modus operandi* of the forecast division of the Weather Bureau at Washington. There is, however, a curious slip in the example of the decoded weather report in cipher. The code message from New York given as "York-ebbing sunbird rockgoat fitchburg pitfish" decoded at some length, fails to give the most important factor, the barometric pressure.

There is a chapter given to Weather Lore and following this two chapters on Seasons and their Characteristics.

Perhaps the parts of the book which will hold the interest of casual readers are the chapters on Weather and Business and the weather and our Homes. Here we are let into the secrets of bad cooking, consequent on weather conditions. "A high moisture content, that is a muggy atmosphere,—slows up most cooking processes, checks evaporation of moisture from foods, and consequently requires longer periods than usual to cook them done. Pastry may be less crisp than normally and bread dough may refuse to rise. . . ."

It is true that on all advanced kitchen ranges there is a thermometer; but the above would seem to indicate the need of a psychrometer, or vapor pressure indicator. Would a good cook bother with humidity?

Personally our experience indicates that pressure is the important factor, for the boiling point changes with change in pressure. And although our author does not give pressure the importance which we think it deserves, he gives his case away by saying "On days when the pressure is normal or above the cook is in a splendid mood and friend wife greets the husband with smiles."

The book is well printed, unusually free from misprints, and the illustrations, while for the most part restricted in size, are well brought out. The most striking cloud picture, entitled Fog Lifting, is wrongly credited to the U. S. Weather Bureau. It is a copy of a photograph made by the reviewer. Some of the other illustrations do not seem to be properly credited. It would be well, too, in future editions to extend the selected list of publications on the Weather. We notice the omission, for example, of "Weather" by E. E. Free and Travis Hope (Robert McBride & Company, New York, 1928), and other modern books on the subject; while on the other hand, books that were issued twenty years ago are listed.

## Indian Lore

A BOOK OF INDIAN TALES. By CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1929.

THIS book is superior to many of its kind, inasmuch as there has been no attempt to remodel the tales to any literary whim of the author's. In the process of a literary career, which had many points of contact with the revolting tribes of the West and the Northwest, these tales were gathered, and are here retold with a grateful simplicity and directness.

They begin as far back as 1878, when the Bannacks, Piutes, and Umatillas were on the warpath, and cover a very wide range of tribal cultures and backgrounds—Chilkaht, Klamath, Chippewa, and Thlinkit. As they are mostly related by members of the fragmentary groups whose culture had been invaded by the Whites, and colored by more or less forced association with neighboring tribes, the stories have not much ethnological value, since the Indian narrator has, in many cases, quite evidently drawn upon several sources. They nevertheless remain quite definitely Indian, and humanly revealing from the point of view of Indian culture.

The stories, being related for white men, of course omit much of the esoteric significance which all such tales usually have for the tribesmen to whom they are native. They become mere "wonder tales," but in so far as Indian legends in that shape are worth recording and saving, Colonel Wood has done an excellent service.

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# ....But Is It Art?

FOR about one hundred and seventy-five years prose fiction has been a major department of literature. During that period it has tended to absorb more and more of the creative energy available and the respect accorded it by criticism has continually increased. Most of us are inclined to regard the patronizing attitude once assumed towards it as no more than the result of a quaint prejudice and we take for granted the assumption that the novel has proved itself one of the most important of art forms. The list of novelists to whom the title "great" is conventionally awarded must be nearly as long as the list of similarly honored poets, playwrights, and philosophers; and this, it must be remembered, is despite the fact that nearly all the former have lived within a very short period.

These writers of fiction have been, moreover, for the most part very voluminous fellows. While the "Complete Works" of even the more voluble poets may usually be contained in one substantial volume and that of most of the playwrights in a reasonable number of pages, the novelists go marching across library shelves in a most alarming fashion so that though we still occasionally hear of youths who have taken all Balzac, all Dumas, all Dickens, and the rest at one great gulp, any real familiarity with the work of "the great novelists" is far rarer than a sound knowledge of that of the accepted masters in other departments of literature. Even well read persons are quite content to leave untasted scores of novels which they assume to deserve their reputation as classics. No one seems to feel the lack seriously, no one fears to be called uncultivated if he is unfamiliar with a good two-thirds of all the novels whose titles are well known to him. He would be ashamed to admit that he had never read Pope or Racine but even though letters happened to be his profession he might confess quite frankly (as I do here) both that he did not happen ever to have read "Bouvard and Pécuchet" and that he had, even from secondary sources, only a very vague idea of what "Middlemarch" is about. Passionate admirers of either may be inclined to hold me in contempt for remaining ignorant of these two famous books; but it would not be difficult to find two others equally renowned which they have passed by.

* * *

Thus though the prodigious bulk of the frankly ephemeral fiction published each year and each year read by some one is frequently lamented, the bulk of the fiction which is held from year to year in some sort of respect without, however, actually being a necessary part of the cultivated man's equipment, is hardly less appalling. It is conventionally regarded as part of the heritage of letters but no one can take possession of more than a very small part of that supposedly invaluable heritage and no one seems very seriously concerned over the impossibility of claiming it all. Is it merely because the treasures of this sort bequeathed us by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are so incalculably rich that the greater number of them must perforce be left unregarded or can it possibly be that the greatness of the great novels is actually more transitory than the historians and critics of literature can bring themselves to admit? How many of the "immortal" works of fiction continue to exhibit any really active life? How many of them can be sincerely regarded as indispensable to the cultivated man?

Frankly and at the risk of drawing upon my head a contemptuous protest from various classes of persons I am inclined to answer my own query with the words "very few." It is not, be it remembered, a question of how many were the work of men conspicuously talented, or of how many were historically important. Neither is it a question of how many we have read with pleasure and profit; but quite simply a question of how many may fairly be considered as individually indispensable in the sense that Pope and Wordsworth, Sophocles and Marlowe, are individually indispensable. Supposing that we were called upon to advise a young man seriously interested in literature and about to devote a few years to reading, not for an academic degree, but for the purpose of familiarizing himself with "the best that has been thought and said." How many of the novelists should we tell him to consider with serious attention? Should he read a good deal of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Balzac, Zola? . . . These are all great names. . . . Of Hawthorne, Howells, James, Meredith, Hardy, Moore, Bennett, Galsworthy, Wells? . . . The question is an even more ticklish one. But perhaps we should be inclined to consider even Hardy and James less absolutely indispensable than we should have considered them even a few years ago.

* * *

If his time is limited (as everyone's is) would we not be compelled to confess that Sir Thomas Browne and Dryden, that Saint Augustine and Gibbon, are far more nearly indispensable? Moreover, though we should not want him to remain ignorant of all the novelists just mentioned should we not be very much inclined to suggest that any one of them might be left out in order to make room for a dozen of the most admired novels written during the last two or three years—not necessarily because we were of the opinion that these more recent works were, by any absolute standard, as good or better than those of the author whom we decided to omit but simply because so much of the importance of a novel is likely to lie in its relation to passing manners, opinions, and moods, that its value fades with their passing? Thus Sinclair Lewis may be, at a certain place and for a certain number of years or months, better than Dickens.

It is true that many of the great works in other genres had in their own time a similar journalistic interest. Gibbon and Wordsworth managed to preach quite effectively to their generations; Saint Augustine and Sir Thomas Browne had things to say which had an immediate relevance to their age. Nor would it be impossible to maintain with some show of reason that a very considerable part of the obvious content of their writing is outmoded in the same sense that the content of Thackeray's novels is outmoded. But after time has made its deductions, after it has solved in its own way many of the problems with which they were concerned and obliterated even the memory of most of the antagonists against whom they struggled, there is something solid left over, something which does not come to us faintly across a chasm like the sentiments of the older novels but something which gives us the illusion of not existing in time at all for the reason that its foundations do not rest upon anything which changes.

We call this something left over Art and if we wished temporarily to beg the whole question we might say that the trouble with the novel has been that too few of even the greatest examples of the genre have had Art enough in them. But there is, fortunately, another and more illuminating way of saying the same thing which is to remark that they have, on the contrary, usually had far too much of what is commonly called Life. And though that may seem an odd criticism to make when works of literature are so frequently praised in proportion to the directness with which they seem to present contemporary existence the whole matter becomes quite simple when the distinguishing features of the novel are considered.

* * *

Of all the forms it is obviously the one which involves the fewest inevitable artificialities. Its vast popularity has depended upon the fact that its relevance to the lives of those who read it is direct and immediate. But this very fact has meant that the novelist has not usually been compelled to create any autonomous world of his own. Observation supplies him with situations in a form very like that in which they are finally presented and the speech of his contemporaries furnishes him with a language very like that which he uses. It is very often his aim to make his books no more than continuations of or projections forward from the lives of his readers and these books are consequently interesting only so long as daily life continues to follow the patterns which the author has imitated. Yet admirable as this method may seem to some it can hardly be denied that the novels which survive do so because of certain artificialities—because the author has created either a language of his own or a world of his own.

If Dickens is, as I believe, more often read than Thackeray it is surely not because he is more "real" but because he is less so. He has a language which was never spoken but which, unlike any mere reproduction of the idiom of some moment, has laws, habits, and flavors perceptible to the reader without reference to any language previously heard. He has also a world of his own which may not correspond very closely to any world which ever existed but which is sufficiently clear in its outlines and sufficiently self consistent both to exist in its own right and to be entered by a reader who may enjoy it without being himself a Victorian. And if this is true of a writer who continues, like Dickens, to maintain a dubious sort of half-life it is more conspicuously true in the case of those whose claim upon the attention of the student of the art of letters is more insistent. Cervantes, for example, is certainly more nearly indispensable than almost any one of the nineteenth century novelists because Cervantes depended far less than most of them did upon transcripts from life, and, if I am not wrong in believing that of all the English writers of fiction who flourished between Fielding and Hardy, Jane Austen is the one most solidly established as an artist, then she owes her position to the fact that her world was one sufficiently removed from the influence of the main currents of her century to continue to exist like some little island outside of time.

* * *

There is not here either space or occasion to consider the nature of her personal relation to that little island. It may be that her spirit was as limited, as provincial, as it is sometimes supposed to have been, though I myself am inclined to suspect that she was in her own mind far more critical of the moral and social conventions of the society which she describes than she is usually given credit for being. But whether deliberate art or narrow experience was responsible for the fact that she confined herself to the description or the creation of a very remote and homogeneous little society the effect is the same. For us her world is hardly less artificial and hardly more real than the world of Racine but it endures for the same reason—because, that is to say, it is rounded, it is complete, and it contains within itself all that is necessary to make it comprehensible. We may know that there did exist at one time in England a country life which had some points of resemblance to the life described in "Pride and Prejudice" just as we know that there once existed a London society something like that which Thackeray treats of. But though we must remember the fact to be interested in the work of the latter we are no more concerned with the literal truth of Jane Austen's pictures than we are with those of Racine.

Like him, but unlike most of the novelists conventionally called great, she achieved a style—by which is here meant, of course, a good deal more than a language. The fact that her world happened to be a small and relatively tame one is of no importance except in so far as these qualities made it easier for her to handle it and to achieve the unity which so conspicuously marks her work. The important thing is that she did not, like most of her fellow novelists, merely illustrate or project certain phases of the life of the people about her but that she seized upon them as suggestions to be used for the construction of one of those possible and stable worlds the creation of which is the most important achievement of an imaginative writer. The world of her novels is not so much what the society of her region was as what it was striving to be. She idealized it, not, as the more naïve opponents of pure realism urge that a writer should do, by making it kinder, or purer, or better, by some absolute standard, but simply by making it more like itself.

Life may be flux, but if it is, then it is exactly in this that it differs from art. The artist looks into the welter of imperfect and changing form; he sees or he thinks that he sees some pattern struggling to achieve its own perfection; and he makes it his business to realize in the realm of imagination the thing which life will never pause long enough to realize. What he finally sets down is simpler than

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# by Joseph Wood Krutch

what he saw, in the sense that it has been separated from everything irrelevant to itself; but it is also something more perfect. Here are the forms which nature seems to have been struggling to create; here they are brought to perfection and so detached from the elements which constitute the instability of their equilibrium that they continue to exist just as they are long after the forms which suggested them have dissolved. They are worlds which might have been; perhaps worlds which almost were; but within the limits of the realm defined by the particular work of art there is no more flux.

It is not necessary to discuss here the ultimate meaning of the fact that this thing is true of art. It may be simply because, as the psychologists would assure us, art must manage to satisfy some human need for neatness, simplicity, and logic, imperfectly gratified by the confusing spectacle which living affords. Or it may be, as the mystic would have us believe, that by achieving a changelessness and a perfection, art achieves two qualities which relate it to Eternity and thus gives us a mimic world in which the soul, weary of things merely transitory and relative, gets some foretaste of the peace it is destined to feel when it establishes a contact with the absolute. But in either case the fact remains that a piece of fiction like any other work of art succeeds only in so far as it thus succeeds in creating a world of its own.

That world may be, like the world of Cervantes, intrinsically grander than the world of Jane Austen. Often also it may be merely implied, as in the case of those philosophers, historians, and essayists whose work has a significance beyond that of its content because, like the work of Gibbon, for example, it assumes a code of ethics, a system of psychology, and all the other things which are necessary to constitute such a complete world. But whatever writing endures does so because it is art and art always involves, by implication or direct statement, the construction of a stable universe which the artist has managed somehow to set up outside the fluid one in which we live.

* * *

Yet the artist feels upon himself the pressure of his multifarious experience. The less he is content to regard his creation as merely fanciful, the more he is aware of the criticism to which it is subjected by comparison with life. He recognizes that it is, in one of its aspects at least, an interpretation and that as such it must have a certain adequacy. Both he and his audience demand that it correspond at as many points as possible with observation and that it seem to include as much of the variety of experience as is consistent with the necessity of maintaining a shape, a tendency, or a form. Hence arises a conflict as the result of which new spirits (like those called classicism and romanticism) and new literary genres arise. For while on the one hand art is tending always toward the creation and perpetuation of patterns, experience is tending always to disrupt them; the final result being that the artist abandons one such pattern in the effort to construct another which shall take more complete account of what seems to him the most significant features of his experience. Masterpieces of the past are simply worlds which may, and indeed very likely have, been abandoned as adequate interpretations of our experience but which were constructed with a logical self-consistence which has enabled them to continue to exist in their own right.

Now the novel, with which we are here specifically concerned, was, as a literary genre, obviously born out of a desire to get more of daily experience into art than it seemed possible to get into the epic or even the drama. It arose as a result of the increase in the significance attached to the individual experience of the average man as distinguished from either the experience of the poet or those *a priori* generalizations about God, Nature, and Humanity, which were more likely to determine the pattern of literary works in other forms. It was cultivated and read with enthusiasm because it seemed to bring art into closer touch with life, because the materials out of which it constructed its various worlds were to a large extent the materials furnished by daily existence.

Nor can any one deny that at least one half of the purpose for which it was invented has been achieved with an extraordinary success. The library of the world's prose fiction includes an amazing record of the manners, aspirations, and prejudices current during the last century and three quarters with which no similar record made by any other epoch in the world's history can be compared. But how great is the claim of more than an almost negligible fraction of it to be considered as very much more than a record? There is not here any attempt to deny the interest which novels have had and continue to have (particularly when they are new) as a picture of human society often accurate enough to form a basis for the criticism of that society. But the intention is to propound the query which the Devil—who has a way of asking shrewd questions—is said to have whispered into the ear of our progenitor: "But is it Art?" And if it is not, then why acquiesce in the current assumption that it is or keep up the pretense that the majority of the "immortal" novelists are not already dead?

We may remember that when the form was new it was regarded with considerable suspicion and we may suspect that much of the doubt with which the critic contemplated its growing popularity was the result of an uneasy feeling that however much life it might contain there was, as remarked before, not art enough in it. But the defenders of the novel gradually developed in defense a sort of esthetic theory which is, in effect, a denial of the existence of the realm of art. They spoke as though its only function were to record experience and they measured the greatness of a work by nothing except the vividness, the accuracy, and the immediacy with which experience was communicated, so that the novel—which had been born out of an effort to get more experience *into a pattern*—has, for the most part, rested content with transcripts as formless and as ephemeral as life itself. When its achievement is compared with that of the other genres it appears to have accomplished, relatively at least, very little so far as the construction of possible and stable worlds is concerned. The worlds which it has represented are so nearly identical with those which are or have been that it has not accomplished much in the direction of defining those towards which nature seemed struggling. Instead of rescuing something from the flux it has been, for the most part, content to remain part of it.

* * *

The history of the novel is largely a record of repeated and perpetually premature efforts to enlarge its scope rather than of efforts to achieve perfection of form. More and more has been forced into the already bursting mold and, having been made the vehicle for every new intellectual interest, it has been required to teach sociology, to propagandize for liberalism, and to illustrate psychoanalysis. Whenever it has seemed upon the point of mastering any particular sort of material, attention has been distracted from the half-solved problem by the interest aroused in some kind of subject matter with the result that every half-formed pattern has been disrupted before it has achieved its perfection. Writers and readers alike have been so much more interested in experience than they have in art that we might reasonably question whether the main body of international prose fiction should be considered primarily as a department of *belles lettres* at all or whether it would be best for the literary critic to abandon it to those whose chief concern is with the history of manners.

If one hesitates to recommend the latter alternative it is no more because of certain isolated examples of novels which are great through their art than because of potentialities which seem so seldom to have been realized. Only those who consider fancy the highest form of imagination will regard as in itself reprehensible the novelist's desire to encompass as much experience as possible. To all others it must seem obvious that his effort to meet the criticism of experience at as many points as possible is extremely laudable *per se* and they will regret only that he has been inclined to stop short very close to the point where his work as an artist should begin.

Just how he should go about to achieve that form which a not inconsiderable number of critics pause from time to time to urge upon him is another question; but at least one further point may be hinted in connection with the term "synthesis" which has become one of the catch words of current critical writing. To stress it is, to be sure, to indicate the need of form but it is also to imply an ideal of comprehensiveness well nigh impossible—at least at this stage of the game. Perhaps it would be better if the individual novelist should content himself for the present with the achievement of a "style."

One has attained a synthesis when one has put everything together so as to make of it a whole. One has achieved a style when one has put together a few things so harmoniously that for the time being nothing else seems to matter. Dante, so they say, achieved the former—and perhaps he did. Chaucer, and Racine, and Pope, and Wordsworth, and Jane Austen had styles.

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*Joseph Wood Krutch, author of the foregoing article, is one of the most eminent of the younger American critics. Since* 1924 *he has been dramatic critic and an associate editor of the Nation. He is also an associate professor in the Columbia School of Journalism, and one of the board of editors of the Literary Guild. He is the author, among other works, of "Edgar Allan Poe—a Study in Genius" (Knopf) and "The Modern Temper" (Harcourt, Brace).*

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## A Plea to the Archbishop

*(I offer this plea to the Archbishop of Santa Fe hoping that the Church may be induced to restore to sight, under the Sangre de Cristo range, a stone altar-piece carved in New Mexico in the time of De Vargas, a work of the most distinguished and devout beauty, surely the most beautiful reredos in America, yet hidden away in shadow, behind lock and key, in the Cathedral of Saint Francis at Santa Fe.)*

SIX years now I have watched the blood of Christ
Suffuse, at sunset, mountains near my home.
The Sangre de Cristo range has been my range,
Has held my own happiness up to the sky—
And my own wounds and has healed them with its beauty.
No wonder they called these mountains Blood of Christ.
No wonder the captains and the men who came
To Santa Fe three hundred years ago
Took off their helmets and acknowledged God.
Someone who saw the sun those years ago,
And these mountains that console a waterless waste
And bleed at sunset and send water down,
Carved an apostle to the western world—
The shell in whose hand became a mountain-peak,
The look in whose face became the evening-sun—
Pouring baptismal water on the heads
Of Indians kneeling desert-like before him.
The carver, long forgotten by his name,
Has left behind him his undying breath.
And yet you have taken the body of this life
And laid it away in the darkness of a crypt.
O lift it up, O let its resurrection
Bear witness to the mountain and the Lord
That the beauty of holiness can never die,
That ancient cruelty and modern greed,
Seeming so useful through a little hour,
Have no existence in the evening-sun
Of endless evenings on a mountain-top.
If it were otherwise, if the open world
And the open wound of Christ upon his cross
Could not widen men's hearts, it would be vain to care
Whether or not the sun arose or set.
Somebody saw the sun those years ago
Bleeding the blood of life into men's veins
And carved the mystery in living stone.
I pray you, sir, combine your grace with his.

WITTER BYNNER.

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# Round About Parnassus

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS week we shall turn to humorous verse, considering first of all the collected humorous verse of a writer never likely to be companioned on his particular eminence. And we are not sure that his eminence is among what have been referred to as merely the "Foothills of Parnassus." For we are not at all sure that his unique contribution to English verse does not connote absolute genius of a kind. We refer to the work of Lewis Carroll, immortal for his "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass."

Professor McDermott of the Department of English in Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, supplies an introduction to his own compilation for E. P. Dutton of all of the best that the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson ever put into metre. In it he analyzes his subject shrewdly. Carroll's was a Jekyll-and-Hyde existence, after a fashion. His *alter ego*, the Reverend Dodgson, persisted in intruding upon the winged spirit who wrote the immortal nonsense which turns out to be the keenest literary satire of his time. Nor merely literary satire. "The Hunting of the Snark," as Professor McDermott says in other words, is a "reading of life" in terms of nonsense that shows the essential futility of many of its gestures. Again, take the laconic comment of the Grandfather in "Poeta Fit, Non Nascitur," where he has been explaining to his grandson the rules of contemporary verse as the poets of the period seem to have conceived them. At the end of one's poem, the Grandfather says, one must have a great "Sensation Stanza," whereupon his young relative naturally asks him to define "Sensation."

*And the old man, looking sadly*
*Across the garden-lawn,*
*Where here and there a dew-drop*
*Yet glittered in the dawn,*
*Said "Go to the Adelphi,*
*And see the 'Colleen Bawn.'*

*"The word is due to Boucicault—*
*The theory is his,*
*Where Life becomes a Spasm,*
*And History a Whiz:*
*If that is not Sensation,*
*I don't know what it is."*

That is as good condensed criticism to-day as it was yesterday. It is, in fact, quite perfect.

Lewis Carroll was our greatest parodist, and that is not because he "took off" particular poems, such as Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence" or Swinburne's "By the North Sea." He was able to burlesque by substituting brilliantly comic words for the actual words of a household poem or a popular song and thereby turning the whole thing into delectable nonsense. But burlesque of that kind is within the grasp of a good many clever people. It is rather that, when poetry's preoccupation with the ballad, for instance, irked him—as it quite evidently did—he could write such remarkable take-offs of the ballad in general as "The Lang Coortin," where the accent is perfect, the story long drawn out tragedy, and the conclusion a brilliant rocket of wit. Take a verse such as

*Wi' that the doggie barked aloud,*
*And up and doon he ran,*
*And tugged and strained his chain o' gowd,*
*All for to bite the man.*

There is nothing more true to the ballad type in Percy's Reliques.

Then there is the Tennysonian "Melancholetta" (1862) with all its punning upon sadness. This is a different achievement, but no less a striking one. The poet is supposed to be endeavoring to cheer a "dismal sister" whom everything reminds of lachrymal things. The final stanza comes to a perfect close. Meanwhile:

*Some desperate attempts were made*
*To start a conversation;*
*"Madam," the sportive Brown essayed,*
*"Which kind of recreation,*
*Hunting or fishing, have you made*
*Your special occupation?"*

*Her lips curved downwards instantly,*
*As if of india-rubber.*
*"Hounds* in full cry *I like," said she;*
*(Oh how I longed to snub her!)*
*"Of fish, a whale's the one for me,*
It is so full of blubber!"

Here we have satirized the whole esthetic mood of a period, as also in "The Three Voices" (1856) we have many of the philosophical movements of an era enshrined in the deathless remarks of that strange female that A. B. Frost so terrifyingly sets before us in poke bonnet and with large umbrella in his extraordinarily good illustrations for "Rhyme? and Reason?"

*"To dine!" she sneered in acid tone.*
*"To bend thy being to a bone*
*Clothed in a radiance not its own!"*

Who shall say that that last line is not a stroke of genius? This Ancient Female Mariner holds the would-be diner-out with her glittering eye, and on and on she talks with Tennysonian accent until his very blood congeals. She takes from him every fond sentimental resource. She crushes him beneath the exceeding weight of her philosophical speculation, though there are breathless interludes.

*Dead calm succeeded to the fuss,*
*As when the loaded omnibus*
*Has reached the railway terminus.*

Chesterton once spoke for a modern imagery that would employ matter of everyday. In this, as we see, Lewis Carroll anticipated him.

"Phantasmagoria" (1869) has always been one of our favorites. It is, as you probably know, a ghost story. The most lyrical part comes with the opening of Canto IV, with lines that are forever enshrined in the minds of one American family at least as veritable household words:

*"Oh, when I was a little Ghost,*
*A merry time had we!*
*Each seated on his favorite post,*
*We chumped and chawed the buttered toast*
*They gave us for our tea."*

You will notice the perfection of the versification. And another extremely difficult success achieved by Lewis Carroll was the absolute conversational naturalness of his dialogue in verse. The second stanza of Canto IV, being the nearest to hand, may serve as an illustration:

*"That story is in print!" I cried.*
*"Don't say it's not, because*
*It's known as well as Bradshaw's Guide!"*
*(The Ghost uneasily replied*
*He hardly thought it was.)*

It looks very easy to do, does it not? In fact all Carroll's verse flows with such apparent ease that it ought to be a simple matter to talk that way in metre. The fact remains that to sustain the satiric note of apparent rational discourse achieving nothing but absurdity, and to keep the rapid account of it smoothly and literately going within strict metrical verse structure, is a task just about as hard as that of writing poetry that seems as though it had always been with us, so perfectly is it organized.

When we come to Carroll's nonsense vocabulary as exemplified in the superb "Jabberwocky" we approach another signal triumph. Somehow this nonsense language is just exactly right. It is expressive. The words are words that we feel should always have been added to the language. Even though we may visualize some of the objects mentioned differently than did Humpty-Dumpty when he said

"Well, *'toves'* are something like badgers—they're something like lizards—and they're something like corkscrews."

"They must be very curious-looking creatures."

"They are that," said Humpty-Dumphy, "also they made their nests under sundials—also they live on cheese."

There are certain Carrollian lyrics in Professor McDermott's excellent compilation which are less familiar than the great ones. And we were particularly interested in his remarks upon the instrusion of the Reverend Dodgson into "Sylvie and Bruno" and "Sylvie and Bruno Concluded." In fact, save for the verse, the latter volume is almost unreadable to-day, so stiff is it with theological discussion and all that infinitely weird other side of the greatest satirist of logic who perhaps ever existed in English verse.

We perceive that we have reached our limit without space for mention of the three modern books of light—most of it light—verse that we intended to touch upon. But we shall recommend them here and take them up next week.

Recommended:

THE LADY IS COLD. By E. B. W. Harpers. 1929.
STRANGE TRUTH. By "ELSPETH." Houghton Mifflin. 1929.
PARAMOUNT POEMS. By MORRIS BISHOP. Minton, Balch. 1929.


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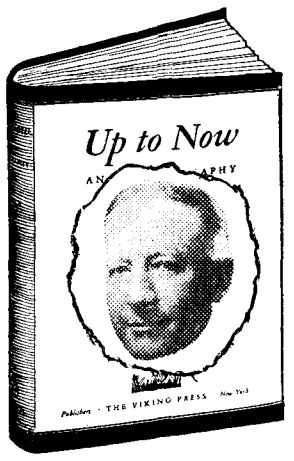


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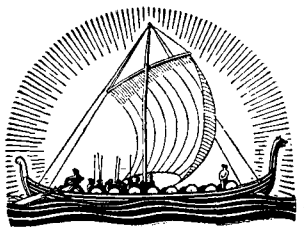

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# Foreign Literature

## Two Austrian Poets

GEDICHTE. By RICHARD BILLINGER. Leipzig: Insel Verlag. 1929.

GEDICHTE. By MAX MELL. (With woodcuts by SWITBERT LOBISSER.) Vienna: F. G. Speidel'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung. 1929.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

THE past three or four years have seen the waning of the Expressionist school of German poetry, and the waxing of a group which is opposed to it in almost every respect. It is devoted to the peasant, while the Expressionists exalt the factory-worker or at least the city-dweller; it avows a religious faith, whereas most of the Expressionists seemed to advocate a materialistic determinism consonant with their Marxist economic and political theories; it follows the traditional forms of poetry, in contrast with the deliberately revolutionary, often incoherent technique of the Expressionists. Of this return to tradition a number of young poets along the Rhineland and in the Austrian provinces have made themselves the prominent exponents, and among the Austrians the first place is certainly taken by Richard Billinger and Max Mell, whose dramatic work is already known to the readers of this *Review.*

Richard Billinger, born in 1893 at St. Marienkirchen, in Upper Austria, made his first appearance a few years ago with the volume of lyrics entitled "Über die Äcker." This collection, slender but at once recognized by a number of critics of German literature, is included in this volume of Collected Poems, which do not belie the promise of the first publication. Billinger is revealed as a sincere, original poet, of keen observation and vigorous expression, with a strain of vivid mysticism which has almost a hint of William Blake, as in the poem "Mariae Verkündigung." Other poems have a reminder, for English readers, of Wordsworth, but it is the Austrian peasant, with his solid religious faith and his simple pride in his work, or it is the Austrian landscape, chiefly under a grey or stormy sky, that forms the subject of his lyrics. Occasionally there is a pagan glimpse, as in the appeal to the one naked saint, Sebastian, to show himself in the fields like a god, but this southern emotion is rare; it is generally the simple, unemotional Catholic faith of the Austrian villager that finds expression in these verses—and an expression which entitles Billinger to rank as a true poet, in the line of the earlier Rilke. A typical poem is "Wir Bauern," the beginning of which may be quoted as a specimen:

*Wir Bauern dulden keinen Spott*
*An unsern Herrn und Helfer Gott.*

*Was wären wir wohl ohne ihn?*
*Eine Ehschaft ohne Gatten.*
*Ein Bienstock ohne Königin.*
*Ein Baum ohne Frucht und Schatten.*

Max Mell gives the impression of greater sophistication. Perhaps this is due to the more sustained character of his verse, which sometimes extends to the ode-form, whereas most of Billinger's work is in the short, apparently artless lyrics. Essentially the outlook on life is the same; the patient, laborious peasant, the village in sunshine and storm, the life of the fields and the Austrian valleys—these are his chief subjects, and all the complications of social revolution, wage-slavery, the sexual problem, the dirty city streets, and the garish lights, might not exist so far as his poems are concerned. Like Billinger, he is for the most part a severely objective poet, life as he finds it in the country is beautiful and ennobling, and he has no occasion for torturing self-questionings. Part of his long poem "Sommernacht-Gleichnis" may be quoted as an example:—

*O Leben. So erhob ich*
*Mein Herz zum Dank,*
*O Leben und Sein.*
*Voller guter Geister*
*Ist dein Kreis.*
*Voller rettender Wahrheit*
*Dein Wehn.*

There is no conscious reaction in all this, not a hint of opposition or challenge. One cannot doubt that the poet is describing what he sees and knows, and one cannot but feel a certain relief that there is a world to which the expressionists and naturalists were strangers—a world of peace and simplicity which we may well have thought had been lost to the world for ever.

## Academies

DER GEDANKE EINER ENGLISCHEN SPRACHAKADEMIE IN VERGANGENHEIT UND GEGENWART. By HERMANN M. FLASDIEK. Jena: Verlag der Frommannschen Buchhandlung. 1929.

VERÖFFENTLICHUNGEN DER PREUSSISCHEN AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE: Jahrbuch der Sektion für Dichtkunst: 1929. Berlin: S. Fischer. 1929.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

FROM these two books the conclusion might well be drawn that the academic idea is foreign to the Germanic genius. Matthew Arnold, of course, long ago explained the growth of the French Academy and reasons why a similar institution could, even should, never arise in England. When he wrote, however, there was a flourishing Academy at Berlin, and he mentioned it, even indicating that something limited and scientific in its scope such as the Prussian institution might well come in Great Britain. But the academy as the prescriber of taste, correctness of diction, and spelling, the provider of literary standards, the association of the best and most authoritative representatives of a nation's culture—this was foreign to the English as to the German tradition, and the scientific or artistic academies which both countries have possessed for many years have been extremely slow in enlarging their scope so as to admit the literary element.

Dr. Flasdiek's book is a most interesting and thorough piece of research into the evolution of the idea of an academy in England, from the age of Shakespeare until the year 1927. The purely historical section occupies five-sixths of the book and represents probably the most exhaustive study of its subject ever made. Certainly it must be indispensable to the intensive student of English literature, above all in the eighteenth century. For the non-specialist reader the main interest of the book will lie in the last chapter, which is a consideration of the academic idea in England to-day, in the light of the preceding historical study. Dr. Flasdiek discusses the British Academy and the Society for Pure English, devoting much attention to the attempts to produce a linguistic *entente* between England and the United States, and to propagate the English language in the interests of policy. His conclusion, however, is that the legislative idea of the academy is impossible of attainment in England, and is even expressly disclaimed by those leading scholars, such as Lord Balfour, who have given their support to the present-day institutions mentioned. For—we summarize Herr Flasdiek—the academy, properly so-called, is the outcome of classicism, and classicism is the outcome of a state. But England is a society, and no state. Individual freedom is still the English *Gesellschaftsideal* and it runs contrary to the academic idea.

In view of this conclusion it is curious to note that Prussia, which never claimed individual freedom as its highest ideal, and has certainly claimed to be a *Staat* before it was a *Gesellschaft*, should have had to wait until 1926 until it obtained a literary academy. Since the seventeenth century an academy of arts and sciences existed in Prussia, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries important writers were elected to it. But there was no literary section, in spite of propaganda for it by such authorities as Von Ranke, until after the war, in 1918, the proposal was actively taken up and supported by the Government, and became an accomplished fact eight years later. But it is, of course, not a replica of the French Academy; it numbers very many leading German writers, it has acted on behalf of the whole German literary craft in such matters as the censorship—to which a good deal of the volume under review is devoted—and it worthily celebrated the Lessing centenary. But it does not seem likely to aspire to the rôle of law-giver; on the contrary, many of its ideas, in politics as in literature, seem to be far from conservative. It will be interesting to watch its growth.

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The Italian Academy of Sciences, Art, and Literature, which is to be formally inaugurated by Mussolini on October 28, and of which Senator Tittoni is president, will number, when complete forty members. Thirty members, seven for each of the first two classes and eight for each of the last two, were nominated last March by royal Decree, and the remaining ten will now be chosen by Mussolini. Members of the Academy will have the title of Excellency, and will rank as High Officers of the State. No member of Parliament may be an Academician and no woman is eligible for admission.

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# Points of View

## A Correction

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir:

May we take this opportunity of correcting one of Chandler R. Post's statements in his splendid review of "English Mediæval Painting," by Tancred Borenius and E. W. Tristram, published by the Pegasus Press? He says: "The superb and numerous plates of illustrations, which are so important a feature of the Pegasus publications, are somewhat vitiated in this instance by the considerations that they are very often based on Mr. Tristram's water colors rather than on the originals, and that the cases of such derivation are not each so labelled." On page 62 of "English Mediæval Painting," below the heading "List of Plates," the following text is printed: "The plates marked with an asterisk are reproduced from drawings by Professor E. W. Tristram in the Victoria and Albert Museum, except plates 57 to 61, which are from drawings in the House of Commons." There is a large asterisk against each plate which comes from Mr. Tristram's water colors. There are one or two exceptions, such as plate 4, where the source of the picture is mentioned. The reason for the reproductions from Mr. Tristram's water colors is that most of the originals are in such a state that reproductions directly from them would show little or nothing. A substantial portion of the value of the book lies in the fact that, by reproducing Mr. Tristram's extraordinarily faithful copies, it has been possible to supply students with documents concerning early primitives, some of which, since Mr. Tristram copied them, are practically invisible.

In fact, Lord Lee of Fareham, writing in *Apollo* of February, 1928, states: "With becoming modesty they (the authors) likewise omit to acknowledge the unique record of pioneering work, in this particular field, by Professor Tristram, who, for more than twenty years, has devoted his incomparable pencil and pen to creating a permanent record of the scanty and perishable examples of British primitive painting which have survived until our day."

We are taking the trouble to make this detailed explanation, as the main goal in making the Pegasus Press plates is to supply absolutely accurate and authentic background material. THE PEGASUS PRESS

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## Contrast as a Device

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

SIR:

Powerful contrast, as a literary device, has always been very effective, in fiction or any other form of writing. The most striking use of contrast in fiction, that occurs to my mind, is in Kipling's celebrated tale, "The Man Who Was." But that tale is so well known to sophisticated readers that it would be absurd to repeat it here. I have in mind an equally striking use of the same device, to be found in one of Jack London's books, "The People of the Abyss." The book is a long narrative essay, not specially readable, although more readable than the average novel. Buried in the middle of the book there is a chapter describing Coronation Day in London, when Edward the Seventh was crowned. In that chapter we find the element of contrast raised to the nth power.

More than six thousand prelates, priests, statesmen, princes, and warriors beheld the crowning and the anointing, says Mr. London; the rest of us saw the pageant as it passed. He then goes on to tell us what he observed, describing how the line of march was guarded by soldiers, by constabulary, by blue-jackets, by marines, by lancers and hussars, a superb display of armed power.

—From the Union Club to Whitehall swept the glittering, massive curve of the Life Guards, gigantic men mounted on gigantic chargers, steel-breastplated, steel-helmeted, steel-caparisoned, a great war-sword of steel ready to the hand of the powers that be. At the Abbey,—clad in wonderful, golden raiment, amid fanfare of trumpets and throbbing of music, surrounded by a brilliant throng of masters, lords and rulers, the King was being invested with the insignia of his sovereignty.—

—But hark! There is cheering down Whitehall; the crowd sways; the double walls of soldiers come to attention, and into view swing the King's watermen, in fantastic medieval garbs of red, for all the world like the van of a circus parade. Then a royal carriage, filled with ladies and gentlemen of the household, with powdered footmen and coachmen most gorgeously arrayed. More carriages, lords and chamberlains, viscounts, mistresses of the robes, lackeys all. Then the warriors, a kingly escort, generals bronzed and worn, from the ends of the earth come up to London town; Admiral Seymour of China; Kitchener of Khartoum; Lord Roberts of India, and all the world; the fighting men of England.

—But here they come in all the pomp and certitude of power, and still they come, these men of steel, these war-lords and world-harnessers. Pell-mell, peers and commoners, princesses and maharajahs, equerries to the King and yoemen of the Guard. And here the colonials, lithe and hardy men. And here the conquered men of Ind, swarthy horsemen and sword-wielders, fiercely barbaric, blazing in crimson and scarlet, Sikhs, Rajputs, Burmese, province by province and caste by caste. And now the Horse Guards, a glimpse of beautiful cream ponies, and a golden panoply, a hurricane of cheers, the crashing of hands; "The King! The King! God save the King!" Everybody has gone mad. The contagion is sweeping me off my feet. I, too, want to shout, "The King! God save the King!" Ragged men about me, tears in their eyes, are tossing up their hats and caps ecstatically. "Bless 'em! Bless 'em! Bless 'em!" See, there he is, in that wondrous golden coach, the great crown flashing on his head, the woman in white beside him likewise crowned.—

Then the narrative goes on to describe the crowds in the streets.—I drift with the crowd out of the square, into a tangle of narrow streets, where the public-houses are a-roar with drunkenness; men, women and children mixed together in colossal debauch. As night drew on the city became a blaze of light. Splashes of color, green, amber and ruby, caught the eye at every point, and "E.R." in great, cut-crystal letters backed by flaring gas was everywhere. The crowds in the streets increased by hundreds of thousands.—

Then Mr. London left the crowded thoroughfares and walked to the bank of the river, where he found two beggars.—I sat on a bench on the Thames Enbankment. On the bench beside me sat two ragged creatures, a man and a woman, nodding and dozing. I talked with the man. He was 54, and a broken-down docker. Of course he would eat. So would the girl, and we started for a coffee-house. Between them they stowed away a prodigious amount of food, this man and woman, and it was not till I had duplicated and triplicated their original orders that they showed any signs of easing down.—

He asked them to explain what they did in the morning for something to eat. And they explained. The method was to try to get a penny, "if you haven't one saved over;" then go to a coffee-house and order a pot of tea, drink the tea in little sips, lingering and loitering at the table, meanwhile keeping the keenest lookout for scraps and crusts that others might leave behind, appropriating such scraps and crusts for themselves. "The thing," said the man judicially as the trick dawned, "is to get hold of the penny."

Here, certainly, is a powerful piece of contrast. On the one hand the boundless cost of the coronation, with its pomp and display, its gold and jewels, gorgeous costuming; men brought from the ends of the earth to celebrate a single day; crowds in the streets running wild and flinging away their money in drunkeness and revelry. On the other hand the two outcasts, with whom the problem in life was "to get a penny!" If that isn't contrast, what is?

ROGER SPRAGUE.

General Morris Schaff, who died the other day, at the age of eighty-nine, was the author of several books, including "The Battle of the Wilderness," "Sunset of the Confederacy," and "Jefferson Davis." He was graduated from West Point in 1862, and entered the Civil War as a second lieutenant in the Ordnance Corps.

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# The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

## Belles Lettres

THOMAS HARDY: Novelist or Poet? By *A. Edward Newton.* Privately printed.

THE STUDY OF POETRY. By *Paul Landis* and *A. R. Entwistle.* Nelson.

TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. By *Edward Chauncey Baldwin.* Nelson.

GAELIC LITERATURE SURVEYED. By *Aodh de Blácam.* Irish Book Shop, 780 Lexington Ave., N. Y. $5.

LIFE AND THE BOOK. By *Hilary G. Richardson.* Macmillan. $1.75.

THE PROFESSION OF POETRY. By *H. W. Garrod.* Oxford University Press.

SHORT STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE. By *G. F. Bradby.* Macmillan. $2.50.

## Biography

MARLOWE AND HIS CIRCLE. By *Frederick S. Boas.* Oxford University Press. $2.50.

LINCOLN AND HIS WIFE'S HOME TOWN. By *William H. Townsend.* Bobbs-Merrill. $5.

SHADOW OF DEATH. By *Dick Grace.* Doubleday, Doran.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD. (Travellers' Library.) Cape-Smith. $1.

THE LIFE OF JOHN MARSHALL. By *Albert J. Beveridge.* Houghton Mifflin. 2 vols. $10.

THE AMAZING BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. Compiled and edited by *J. Henry Smythe, Jr.* Stokes. $3.

VOLTAIRE. By *Joseph Lewis.* Free-Thought Press.

JOHN RAMAGE: A Biographical Sketch and a List of His Portrait Miniatures. By *Frederic Fairchild Sherman.* Privately printed.

## Drama

EUROPEAN THEORIES OF THE DRAMA. By *Barrett H. Clark.* Appleton. $5.

GIANTS IN THE EARTH. By *O. E. Rörlvaag.* Dramatized by *Thomas Job.* Harpers. $2.

THE MARRIAGE OF HOSEA. By *Isachak.* Halcyon Publishing Co.

BERKELEY SQUARE. By *John L. Balderston.* Macmillan. $2.

## Education

FRESHMAN YEAR ENGLISH. By *Benjamin Bradley.* Noble & Noble. $2.

REAL LIFE STORIES. By *W. W. Thiesen* and *Sterling A. Leonard.* Macmillan.

NEWER WAYS WITH CHILDREN. By *W. V. O'Shea.* Greenberg. $3.50.

THE COLLEGE BOOK OF PROSE. Compiled by *Robert W. Gay.* Houghton Mifflin. $2.

ENGLISH PROSE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By *Hardin Craig* and *J. W. Thomas.* Crofts. $3.50.

## Fiction

LOVE DE LUXE. By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN. Macaulay. 1929. $2.

The action of this infantile farce takes place on board an Atlantic liner during her six days passage from Havre to New York, with various first-cabin voyagers doing their utmost to make things hum. There are a rich American girl and her old-fashioned chaperon, the former's persevering suitor, a naïve Basque heiress, an English cinema beauty and her double-crossing press agent, all innocently or wilfully entangled in the meshes of the absurd plot. Though told throughout in a tempo of giddy exuberance, the story is flat and tedious.

FULL MEASURE. By HANS OTTO STORM. Macmillan. 1929. $2.50.

An idealistic young engineer, John Manley, joins the staff of American National Telegraphs, an organization engaged in the transmission of wireless communications. He is sent, with another engineer, to set up a radio station in Central America; then to assist in the construction, near Los Angeles, of the most powerful station yet built; and finally, for reasons not altogether creditable to the company, to China, where an unsavory concession has been dragged out of a helpless government. Manley has a respect, almost a love, for his work, but his idealism dies in the face of home-office trickery while he is in China. His honesty and courage barely survive the crash. The company shares with Manley the center of the reader's interest, and throughout the novel there are strong suggestions of the possible treachery and unwholesomeness of a corporation so vast and insinuating as the American National Telegraphs. Contrasted with this feeling of unsteadiness in high places is the integrity and the romantic faithfulness to the job of the working engineers.

Such a story as this could have been a powerful novel. But "Full Measure" is not quite up to the mark. Mr. Storm writes with such a sense of the implications of his task that he rather flounders and splashes. His narrative is heavy and confused, and only in brief stretches does he really move us. The Chinese episode is by far the best of the novel. In spite of his weaknesses, however, Mr. Storm has given us something definitely unusual in mood and in subject matter. "Full Measure" is ruggedly honest and serious, deserving our respect.

THE ROMANTIC PRINCE. By RAFAEL SABATINI. Houghton Mifflin. 1929. $2.50.

"The Romantic Prince" is standard Sabatini, all wool and a yard wide. Set in the seventh decade of the fifteenth century, it has for historical background the struggles of Charles of Burgundy with Louis XI of France and with the resisting burghers of Zealand. The central character is Count Anthony, heir to the throne of Guelders, a romantic (that is, idealistic and chivalric in an age when the codes of knighthood and crusade were moribund) but nevertheless highly competent and practical-minded young man. Perhaps the historical background is a little less effective here than in some other novels by Mr. Sabatini, such as, say, "The Hounds of God"; this slight weakness is probably due to our comparative unfamiliarity with the policies and the goals of these fifteenth-century militarists. But at any rate the expected love interest is here: the dilemma of the burgher's daughter and the honorable Count Anthony. The characters are effective, the glimpses of background convincing. Above all, the story is excellent, swiftly and logically proceeding to the ultimate embrace. And it is the beauty of Mr. Sabatini's method that, although this embrace of the lovers is from the first foreseen, we lose neither interest in the plot nor respect for the characters.

THE SHADOW AND THE STONE. By LAURENCE W. MEYNELL. Appleton. 1929. $2.

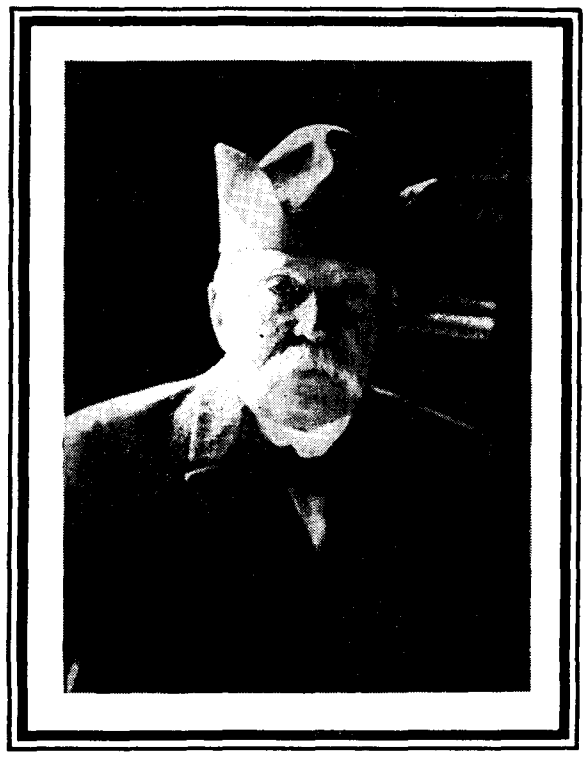
Conventional mystery stuff, strong in action and ordinary in plot, this is the tale of the perilous adventures which befell a young London toff when he chanced upon the evidence of a sinister intrigue to stir the black tribes of Africa to revolt against white supremacy. He imparts the information to a British secret service chief and the latter's American colleague, both of whom are on the trail of the conspirators. The successful launching of the black revolt depends upon the restoration of a stolen precious stone to its former abiding place, the person of a sacred African idol, and the sacrifice, at the same time, of a captive English girl. The story seethes with violence, but suffers from a lack of ingenuity in the working out of the conclusion.

(*Continued on page* 324)

"Enemies are the interest one draws on greatness."

**CLEMENCEAU'S**

IN THE EVENING OF MY THOUGHT



"I am eighty-six years old and I am nearing the end. I approach the portals of death and I see before me the Angel Gabriel with his trumpet. He says to me, 'Have you anything to say before you pass these portals?' And I turn to him and reply, 'I should think I had something to say, and I say it here in this book.'"

From an Interview.

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# The New Books

## Fiction

(*Continued from page 322*)

BLACK SUN. By ABEN KANDEL. Harper. 1929. $2.50.

The frustration of idealistic youth by its own weakness and failure to compromise with the demands of prosaic realities is here treated with competence and distinction. Until he was twenty-nine, Michael had been an irresponsible rolling stone, a newspaperman whose career was marked by high but unfulfilled promise. Then he met Louise and seduced her, immediately righting the error, however, with marriage, and settling down with her in a lower middle-class New York suburb. He found steady work on a trades paper, toiled faithfully, but began to fear that he was becoming one of the stolid, futile wage-slaves he despised, and ultimately lost his job in a general laying-off of dispensable employees. Meanwhile, Louise had borne him a child, the handsome, urbane Janet had entered his life as the one desired woman, and he had been reunited with Peter, his adventurous, predatory comrade of the old days. To this more commanding individual Janet gave her love, causing Michael dire anguish. And when surfeited with his conquest, Peter hearkened again to the wanderer's call, Michael, jobless and despondent, faced the dreary prospect of seeking means to support the neglected Louise and their baby. In the admirably drawn, contrasted characters of the two men, Michael's oversensitive, vacillating, timorous, Peter's dominating, courageous, intensely egoistic, the story achieves a rare and lifelike artistry. Though marred by an occasional want of restraint, the book has flashes of beauty, a profound honesty and conviction not often to be met with in the minor novels of the day.

THE YOUNG MAY MOON. By MARTHA OSTENSO. Dodd, Mead. 1929. $2.50.

In a long-winded, tiresome novel, Miss Ostenso attempts to make significant an essentially inconsequential character. Marcia Gunther drove her husband to suicide when she set off one night for the arms of another man, and forever afterwards she repented of her impulsive flight. A son is born to her (one of those damnably quaint brats who descend from the elfin breed of little Pearl in "The Scarlet Letter"), and with this son she lives, desolate, suspected, and yet smug, on the outskirts of a Western village. Marcia is a stupid, self-centered young woman, and all Miss Ostenso's efforts to make her admirable are in vain. The notion behind the presentation of the character seems to be that if a person is sufficiently well intentioned, no matter how befogged and warped, that person deserves our sympathy. Miss Ostenso further errs in thinking that a mean-spirited small town is any longer news. Our fiction is already clogged with demonstrations that charity is not inherent in the rural mind.

In spite of the cumbrous, pseudo-poetical style, the novel is often vividly descriptive. The characters, usually mere types, occasionally have vigor. But in general, "The Young May Moon" is merely pretentious.

THE STORY OF HASSAN (Hassan Ali Shah). Dutton. 1929. $2.50.

Though the sub-title of this pseudo-autobiographical narrative reads: "A Novel of India Written by Himself and Englished by John Anthony," it seems fairly evident that Mr. Anthony was alone responsible for the composition of the text. Hassan, a Mohammedan lad of the Punjab, whose father is the law-petition writer of their native village, tells the tale of his life from infancy to adolescence. It is a primitive, precarious existence he leads, in a region apparently as yet untouched by British rule, richly enlivened by his elders with their mendacious dealings, domestic squabbles, petty roguery, and puerile violence, all of which the observant boy absorbs as so much knowledge that will further his ambitious future. He runs away from home, and has his first contacts with the mad English, a company of Highlanders adopting him as a mascot, grows attached to the soldiers, and venerates their strange ways, but at length, vastly edified by his wanderings, returns to his own people. Quaintness and naïve irony, a surprisingly intimate grasp of Indian characters and customs, are the strong points of the book.

BIRDS GOT TO FLY. By RUTH BLODGETT. Harcourt, Brace. 1929. $2.50.

This novel has plot, situation, and poise; it conveys character and conversation; it has a theme and a philosophy of life; but its characters are cardboard figures, and their action is entirely mechanical.

Rosanne was the daughter of a divorcée. Sophisticated, déracinée, charming, she had married Alec Macklin, the white hope of the Porter clan of Beldon, Mass., proprietors of Porter's Shoes and possessors of roots, traditions, and endurance. Even Rosanne comments to her husband that "It's sort of queer, isn't it, the way a tumbleweed like me goes and gets herself hitched up to a traditional rooted rubber-plant like you?"

Rosanne is unspeakably depressed by the "Three C's" of Beldon—conventionality, conformity, and creed. While Alec is wrestling for the control and rejuvenation of the family business from his uncle Fraser, Rosanne finds a kindred soul in Carl Grayson, an artist who had married into and been caged by the Porters, and who had "to do the thing he wants to do in the way he wants to do it." To Alec "a marriage certificate is like a land-deed, entitling one to property without the obligation to cultivate." To Carl, well you can guess for yourself what Carl thinks of it.

There is a protracted struggle between duty and desire, and a long duel between Alec and Fraser Porter, between shoes and love, and between traditions and inclinations. In the end, a happy ending is assured by Alec discovering that he cares more for Rosanne than he does for footgear.

GREY MAIDEN: The Story of a Sword through the Ages. By ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH. Longmans, Green. 1929. $2.50.

What is the purpose of these short historical narratives? If Mr. Smith means them to be a sugar-coated teaching of history, he would surely have made them more simple and clear. If they are merely to entertain us, they are inexplicably didactic. This sort of shilly-shallying results merely in dulness.

Each of the eight narratives is set in a different time in the world's history, beginning with the battle of Marathon and ending with Elizabethan England. In each episode there is a good deal of fighting, which may possibly quicken the pulse of the reader. The magic sword from which the book takes its name appears constantly, as it passes from hand to hand through the generations. Mr. Smith completely fails, however, to convince us that the sword is of the slightest interest or importance.

MYSTERY AT SPANISH HACIENDA. By JACKSON GREGORY. Dodd, Mead. 1929. $2.

J. R. P. W. J. D. Rapidan—and when the truth came out he had more names than that—arrived at Spanish Hacienda in a house on wheels drawn by five horses. There had been six horses, but he had lent one to a fugitive from justice, which angered Sheriff Law. Of course J. R. P. W. etc. didn't believe the fugitive had murdered Bill Smith, and neither did Vega Alarcon, the girl at the Hacienda. But her father, Don Luis, was caught up in one of those webs concerning the family honor with which Dons are so often involved and had, willy nilly, to aid the scoundrels. The particular web that enmeshed Don Luis was pretty silly and made a burlesque out of what might otherwise have been an adequate—though cut strictly to the customary pattern—Western story.

JOAN KENNEDY. By HENRY CHANNON. Dutton. 1929. $2.50.

In the vast majority of novels dealing with the Anglo-American marriage question there is an obvious intention to present one side of the subject with extreme partiality and to show up the other as the wilful cause of all the trouble. Rarely are the men and women involved given the semblance of an even break, but Mr. Channon's admirable variation of the theme proves a notable exception. After the war, Joan Vernon, daughter of an ancient, noble Wiltshire family, weds in England Ralph Kennedy, whose father, a Chicago capitalist in failing health, names him successor to the great Kennedy financial interests. When the elder man dies, Ralph, perforce, returns to Chicago with Joan, she unreasonably believing that their American sojourn will be brief and temporary, while their permanent home will always be in England. Her various experiences of the new world, wherein she moves as one of the leading young matrons of an exclusive moneyed set, bitterly disappoint her expectations. Though for ten years she tries honestly to bring herself to fit harmoniously into this alien environment, she fails utterly, the insurmountable barriers being her natural pride of race and class consciousness of superiority.

But the fact also that Joan is an ill-appreciated wife and that Ralph is anything but an ideal husband conveys to one a definite impression that each is as blameworthy for their marital failure as the other. How Joan could have succeeded against the given circumstances is not easy to conceive; toward the end, we somewhat lose sympathy with her and her largely self-imposed trials. Her undeviatingly natural character is the essense of consistency, and the author's treatment of the problem in its every phase could scarcely be excelled for fairness of viewpoint and logic of conclusion.

(*Continued on page 326*)


# THE TREE NAMED JOHN

## By JOHN B. SALE

"Hyere," Henry said, handing John the swimming bladder from the biggest fish, "grease dis en swollit."

"Whut fur?"

"So you kin swim, feller, ainchu got no sense?"

"Is you plum crazy, Henry Po'ter?" John demanded indignantly. "Whut I wan swallow at ole nasty raw fish bladder fer? You ain't got no sense yoself, you ain't."

"My Lawd! Donchu know you ha' t' do dat ef you ever is to larn t'swim? Evybody else ha' t' do it fo dey kin swim: so how you spec you gwi larn lesn you does it, too? *You* ain't no fish; *you* ain't got no swimmin bladder; so how you specs to get aire un lesn you swollit?"

John backed off. "Hyere," Henry repeated firmly, "*swollit.*"

"All right, den, but gimme a lil un. That'n's too big."

"Naw, you swolly disn. Ef you swolly a lil un you'll jes swim like a lil ole pyetch or topwater. Swolly a big un, feller, so you kin swim like a *big* fish."

And down it went.

William Soskin said in the New York *Post*: Mr. Sale dwelt with his Negroes long enough and intimately enough to have sensed the living, folk-steeped background and the shrewd principles upon which much of their superstition is based. What is more, he has been able to reveal and explain those customs and traditions in a setting so real, among people so simply genuine, and in a dialect so accurate, that "The Tree Named John" is likely to give you a far more vivid and authentic impression of Negro life than many a more pretentious work. . . . It seems to me that Mr. Sale displays an adroit and whimsical manner of recording the very appealing life of these Mississippi Negroes, and a dexterity with dialect and dialogue which might equal Julia Peterkin's work in a similar field."

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## The New Books

### Fiction

(*Continued from page* 324)

POOR DEVIL. By HENRY JUSTIN SMITH. Covici, Friede. 1929. $2.50.

In a rather disagreeable, sour novel Mr. Smith, managing editor of the Chicago *Daily News*, gives a long song and dance in dispraise of the modern city. The city in which the novel is set is given no name, but no great amount of intelligence is needed to realize that Mr. Smith is writing about his own Chicago. It is not so much the idiosyncrasies of this particular city that bother him, as it is the qualities of the American city as a type. His objurgations are familiar, and certainly not wholly untrue. This state of mind, however, obviously results from a temperamental bias rather than from clear thinking. Mr. Smith feels that the city is dreary, standardized, hypocritical, man-killing. That is all very well so far as it goes, but it is not the whole truth. There are many men who do not find the American city such a hellish thing; many men are happy, comfortable, and able to find significance as they work and play near Times Square or the Loop. Let no reader of "Poor Devil" feel that from the Chicago newspaper world Mr. Smith sees far and true, or that Mr. Smith has some very special ability to get to the fundamentals of the problem. He is merely possessed by a vituperative attitude towards a thing so complicated, so vast, that it defies and defeats any rigidly held attitude.

The novel as a whole is garrulous, conventional, and superficial. The plot tells of a country lad who gets work in the city with the Faith Publishing Company. Descriptions of this motto factory are the best parts of the novel. After a little success, the lad loses his job and hunts work for many hopeless weeks. Finally, after a melodramatic and quite unconvincing fracas with some stick-up men, the "poor devil" goes back to the country (or so we are led to believe) and, by a wholly sentimental implication, finds at last his true happiness. We should have been much more charitable towards this novel if it were less pretentious, less occupied in laying down the law.

TEMPLE TOWER. By H. C. MCNEILE. Doubleday, Doran. 1929. $2.

Burly Bulldog Drummond again fills the star rôle in a hair-raising melodrama, and though accomplishing nothing spectacular in the way of detection, when the moment for strong-arm work comes performs like a master. His curiosity is sharply piqued by the mystery which envelops an eccentric occupant of a country-house near Rye, a man living under constant protection of a bodyguard and in apparent deadly fear of threatened intrusion from the outside world. While snooping in the neighborhood, Drummond hears from a stranger the extraordinary tale of a criminal gang that had terrorized France thirty years earlier, but had finally been broken up and its members imprisoned in the penal colonies. One of the gang, however, its betrayer, had escaped arrest in possession of their vast loot, and this traitor is the recluse of the country-house, hiding there in dread of vengeance from an old confederate now hunting for him in England. Of course this savage outlaw quickly turns up, and to Drummond's amazement commits several murders preparatory to laying hold of his enemy, but is at last dispatched to eternity in combat with the mighty Bulldog. The tale is not strikingly ingenious, but seems to be sufficiently exciting to satisfy the average mystery addict's requirements.

A GEM OF EARTH. By MARJORIE BOOTH. Harcourt, Brace. 1929. $2.50.

A great deal more should have been done to this novel before it was allowed to see the light of day. Miss Booth writes with ease, and at the start she tricks us into hoping that her novel is going to be successful. But we do not get far before we realize that the whole business is being inexpertly managed, that Miss Booth has no real grip on her material, no clear notion of the course that the action ought to follow. If the novel had been recast and then rewritten it might have been well worth reading. The narrative tells of a middle-class English girl who is seduced by the neighborhood doctor, but who is honorably loved by the doctor's nephew, a rising young novelist. It is all rather insipid and depressing.

ANASTASIA ARRIVES. By *Eleanor G. R. Young*. Sully. $1.

THE C. I. D. OF DEXTER DRAKE. By *Elsa Barker*. Sears. $2.

GREAT DETECTIVE STORIES OF THE WORLD. Edited by *Joseph Lewis French*. Dial. $2.50.

THE TROUT INN MYSTERY. By *Winifred Greenleaves*. Dial. $2.

(*Continued on page* 328)

# *He Built an* EMPIRE *on* Passion *and* Torture

THIS sadist and buffoon on the throne of "Holy Russia," this mocking Tsar who rescued an Empire from barbarism, is at last revealed in all his Gargantuan whims and perversities.

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(*From page 270*)

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Conducted by MARION PONSONBY

ONE of the moot problems of educators and parents has long been the question of how far it is wise to allow children to indulge in the literature of fancy and fantasy. There is, we suppose, general agreement on the fact that no covering rule can be laid down on the subject, that the glove must be cut to fit the hand, and that the type of reading prescribed for the child must be adjusted to his particular bent of mind. If he is given to daydreaming and is wont to dwell in a world apart from that of reality there can be small doubt that his reading ought to counter rather than foster this tendency, while, on the other hand if things to him are never any other than they seem, it is probably the part of wisdom to inject as much of the fanciful into his reading as possible. So much goes without saying.

But where the hitch between the advocates of imaginative literature and its opponents usually comes is in regard to the fairy tales through which most children make their entrance into the world of literature. Many a meticulous mother has been heard to decry the old stories on the ground of their building a world of the impossible for the child and on the score of what she regards as their perversion of accepted canons of feeling and action. But surely of all times of life extreme youth is the one in which the fanciful can most safely be given rein. To the child all the world is fairyland, and each new happening as marvellous as any incident the folklorist can produce. Death, and chicanery, and grewsome detail have no meaning to him, for there is nothing within his experience to give them actuality. He lives very happily with his ogres and witches who are no more terrifying than the first person of color he may meet if he has attained to the age of three or four in a community composed entirely of whites, or the first fantastically arrayed figure he may encounter. All is part and parcel of the same inexperience.

The adult mind is very apt to ascribe to the child a reaction to certain of the episodes of a fairy tale which is quite foreign to the fact. It is the mature and not the very young who read into these stories the implications which parents decry. Few, indeed, are the children who brood over the idea of a child being fattened for the oven, or of babes being left to their fate in the woods. To them it is all part of the general phantasmagoria of living in which anything may betide and in which in the end things come out well for the virtuous. It is the triumph of the righteous or the innocent, rather than the malice of the evildoers, which engages their feelings.

We suppose no one seriously contemplates taking fairy stories entirely out of the reading of the child. To do so would be as much to handicap him in his comprehension of adult literature and its references as to leave him with no knowledge of mythology or Biblical story. And it would be to take out of his later life much of the recollection and the fancy that gives color to the world about him. To curtail his reading of them, except in exceptional cases, would seem a pity. "And truth severe, by fairy fiction drest," makes this grim world a lovelier place.

## Reviews

THE CRUISE OF THE FISHERMAN. By ROMER GREY. New York: Harper & Bros. 1929. $2.

THE WONDERFUL VOYAGES OF CAP'N PEN. By HARRY IRVING SHUMWAY. Illustrated by F. STROTHMAN. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1929. $2.

SQUARE RIGGED. By JACK CALVIN. Illustrated by MAHLON BLAINE. The same.

SHANGHAI PASSAGE. By HOWARD PEASE. Illustrated by PAUL Q. FORSTER. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. $2.

Reviewed by ROBERT L. ROE

THE sea as a background for boys' books continues to tease publishers. Evidently, although the adult mind of the country is turned inland, the adolescent is still hungry for the glamor of far places. Three of these volumes deal with life in sailing ships, if Mr. Shumway's collection of tall tales and stupendous yarns, which have all the qualities of fairy tales backed with a solid flavor of folk humor, may be said to do anything so heavy-footed as to "deal" with life. It is full of exaggeration, whimsy, and mad humor. Adults will get as much out of it as boys, for there are some sly nudges at current foibles. Cap'n Pen is the heartiest and healthiest old liar we have ever met. We hope he is some deserving boy's uncle.

Two other books for boys are by authors who are boys themselves, which seems logical enough, since they should know what boys want. Both books are founded on personal experience, but while Zane Grey's son writes in a hearty, schoolboy style, of what befell him when the novelist took him along for a cruise in a schooner yacht to Cocos Island, the Galapagos, and other out-of-the-way ports, in the way of fishing, hunting, and boyish mischief, Jack Calvin has used the experience he gained in shipping before the mast in the old *Star of Zeeland*, one of the last survivors of the Alaska Packers' Fleet of lofty sailing ships, to lend authenticity to a thrilling yarn of big business intrigue, mutiny, and derring-do on a passage to the Alaskan fishing grounds.

This is surprisingly well written. Calvin reiterates and very evidently has trouble with the chapter endings, but against this difficulty one may set the fact that he has created a protagonist who is a wholesome American boy, neither impossibly brave and cunning, nor mawkishly good.

There are several incredibilities in Howard Pease's "Shanghai Passage." Of these the major one is a question in the mind of the reader as to why the Captain should have chosen Tod Moran and Stuart Ormsby, respectively youthful oiler and ordinary seaman, for his allies against a crowd of bad men who managed their intrigue with superb ineptitude, hesitating at murder when it was in order, and attempting it when it was most likely to be prevented. Granted that it is one of the traditions of the mystery story that the right will win out, one likes to see it win by dint of wit and strength properly applied rather than by the grace of God. The story is slow in getting under way and continues slowly as though the author were not sure what was going to happen next. Mr. Pease has written other, more successful books. He should know better than this. And for one who is advertised on the jacket as one who "knows the sea," which is a statement somewhat incredible on the face of it to anyone who has followed the sea for a considerable period, I should say that he slips up frequently in nautical terminology and information.

RUSS FARRELL OVER MEXICO. By THOMSON BURTIS. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. $1.

BLACK STORM. By THOMAS C. HINKLE. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1929. $2.

PIONEER HEROES. By J. WALKER McSPADDEN. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1929. $2.

Reviewed by EDWIN L. SABIN

THESE three books for boys spread over a wide territory. The action courses the sky and travels the plains, hills, mountains, and rivers of earth. The heroes are company of intrepid explorers and founders.

Mr. Burtis's youthful pilot, Russ Farrell, has earned the enviable distinction of the screen. This is saying something for stories which by virtuous taboo are denied the usual love element. In "Russ Farrell Over Mexico," issued in the Junior Books division as the latest member of the Russ Farrell Series, summoned to the Tampico oil fields, Mexico, Lieutenant Farrell takes to the air again, with comrade old and comrade new, for the purpose of clipping the wings of a band of aerial raiders captained by the bold, mysterious "Hawk"—a Villa of the sky. Things happen. They keep on happening until "The Hawk" finally is bagged. The characters of the three flying detectives are sharply drawn; machine guns crackle; the flying technique is guaranteed to be accurate. But while "Buenos noches" may be expressive enough for daredevil gringo aviators, it is not Spanish—that is, not unless Night herself has now arrived at emancipation from the feminine rôle. This, however, is a book for boys.

"Black Storm" was "a horse of the Kansas hills," and as Dr. Hinkle states in his preface, was "a real character." So was Joe Bain, the twenty-one-year-old cattle-trail foreman who rode him. Brought from Texas into Kansas, through several years Black Storm roved over the buffalo plains, now free, now harassed by man and beast, and yielding only to the man whom he loved. It is the story of a great-hearted horse, and of a great-hearted man, understandingly written by an old-timer who was there. The illustrations are by J. Clinton Shepherd.

For his "Pioneer Heroes" J. Walker McSpadden has chosen representative adventures who for the cause of empire, church, and glory blazed trails through North America. The chapters depict the deeds and characters of La Salle, Iberville, and Bienville who founded Louisiana, Oglethorpe of Georgia, George Rogers Clark, Daniel Boone, Captain Zebulon Pike, Lewis and Clark, Marcus Whitman of Oregon, Father Serra of the California missions, Frémont, and Davy Crockett. There is a fanciful colored frontispiece of the Whitman column outward bound, and there are old portraits, reproduced in half-tone plates, of the Pioneers themselves. Singularly enough, no portrait, from life, of Marcus Whitman exists; his likeness appears only in bronze and stone.

## A Suggestion

There has been in the past few years a constantly increasing number of books dealing with the American Indian, and with primitive life in the Americas. Would it not add illumination to these texts if those children who resided in cities which have museums of natural history were to supplement their reading by visits to them?

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# The New Books

(*Continued from page* 326)

## Juvenile

(*The Children's Bookshop appears on the preceding page*).

PRUDENCE AND PETER. By ELIZABETH ROBINS and OCTAVIA WILBERFORCE. Drawings by LOIS LENSKI. Morrow. 1928. $2.

This reviewer wishes to venture the belief that not many a book with real live instructions in it puts on the pleasing disguise of a story-book and succeeds in carrying off the double game without a failure either on one side or the other. But here is one that does.

We promise to middle-sized child-readers a hearty enjoyment of the Twins' performance in the life of this very likable English family, and great satisfaction in watching their progress in the pursuit of their hobby. From merely hovering about the sacred kitchen precincts and being obliged to "practise" in an improvised fireplace under their walnut tree, they reach proud days when patient persistence finally enables them to take advantage of opportunities arising in the family's wartime kitchen—even to the adventurous point of cooking a dinner for a real General Home-on-Leave. The fiery but, of course, kind-hearted Mrs. Barber, who rules scullery maids, black cats, and magic appetizers in the sacred domain throws out her hints—grudgingly at first—to her two small admirers with such a clever intermixture of amusing narrative from the authors that we guarantee equal enjoyment for the child who, like Prudence and Peter, is stage-struck in the direction of cooking, and for the one who merely wants something interesting and entertaining to read.

The suggestions are not of doll's size nor of the toy-store variety. Not at all; this is honest-to-goodness cook-for-the-family business. The range covered is not, of course, complete, as this is not a cook book—merely a humorous account of a very practical beginning. Perhaps Mrs. Barber, since the Twins so successfully proved their determination and ability, will be persuaded some day to divulge more of her secrets in the same delightful style, and perhaps Lois Lenski will again lend her charming co-operation in her sprightly chapter heads and sketches. Gathering the recipes in practical form at the end of the book offers a needed and satisfactory appendix.

TWO BROTHERS AND THEIR ANIMAL FRIENDS. By LOIS LENSKI. Stokes. 1929. $1.50.

This little tale for very young folks is a simple but entertaining narrative of two small brothers who set forth one hot, dusty summer day to see what adventures the road holds for them. Lois Lenski has pictured their experiences both with pen and pencil, and has introduced enough of happening into her story and enough of objects into her drawings to win and carry along the interest of youngsters. Her illustrations, both in color and black-and-white, are in her usual manner, which is to say that they are both clever and amusing.

## Religion

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN RELIGION. By The Rev. W. E. ORCHARD. Harpers. 1929.

The great Dr. Orchard, whose devotion to his Church is second only to his devotion to the Christ, presents in this book a rather disheartening picture of the present state of Christianity, and a hopeful suggestion for its rehabilitation. Religion as here treated is the Christian religion, and the Church under scrutiny is for the most part the Church in the British Isles. The maladies as diagnosed are, however, pretty general, and his prescription is not limited to British use.

Christianity has this peculiarity, that it is always facing a crisis. The present crisis is one of the worst, being caused by tendencies in modern thought and life which, unchecked, will bring about the disappearance of religion. (He means, of course, the Christian religion.) For many people, religion has become "an irrelevant and indifferent matter," yet these same people are searching for a meaning in life which only religion can certify. Christianity, says Dr. Orchard, should therefore be reconsidered. And the Church, notably the Catholic conception of the Church, should be rehabilitated. This rehabilitation can be hastened "if the Church would set itself more clearly and confidently to offer reasoned answers to the inevitable questions of the human mind, to provide satisfactory forms of worship, and to inspire service of mankind." To these

(*Continued on page* 333)


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ANDRÉ MAUROIS
Contributor to "Books"

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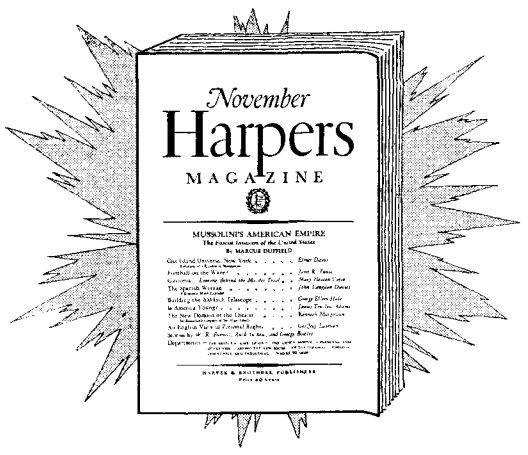


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Elmer Davis—who knows his New York as well as any man living—tells some new things about it in "New York—Our Island Universe." John R. Tunis asks — and answers — the question, "Is Football on the Wane?" And there are stories by Ruth Suckow, W. R. Burnett, and George Bowles.

The next six months will bring intellectual fare of particular interest and importance. There will be a continued story, "A Buried Treasure," by Elizabeth Madox Roberts, who wrote "The Time of Man." There will be articles with such provocative titles as "This Question of Birth Control," "Manners, American and English," and "The Future of the Great City." And the contributors will include such leaders of modern thought as Walter Lippmann, Stuart Chase, Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, and Harry Emerson Fosdick.

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# The Wit's Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

*Competition No. 71.* A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best version, as Gibbon might have written it, of

*Old King Cole was a merry old soul,*
*And a merry old soul was he,*
*He called for his pipe and he called for his bowl*
*And he called for his fiddlers three.*

(Entries should consist of between two hundred and three hundred words of the indicated prose and must reach the office of the *Saturday Review,* 25 West 45th Street, New York City, not later than the morning of November 4.)

*Competition No. 72.* A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the most gorgeous passage (not more than forty lines) of Shakespearean blank verse in which an important witness describes the public meeting of Solomon and Sheba in a "lost" play of that name. (Entries should reach the *Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of November 18.)

Attention is called to the Rules printed below.

## THE SIXTY-SEVENTH COMPETITION

The prize for the most amusing humorless excerpt from a Ph.D. Thesis on "The Allegorical Aspect of Cinderella" has been awarded to Dinah Stevens, of Boston.

## THE PRIZE EXCERPT

Excerpt from a Dissertation on the Allegorical Aspect of Cinderella, offered in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Weakwits University, September 1, 1929.

HAVING demonstrated indubitably the affiliation extant between the Hebrew or Semitic version of the legend,* in which the term "ashes" occurs twice, the protagonist in the first instant referred to as "sitting down" in them, and in the second as "repenting" in them, but which, for allegorical purposes, we may take to mean one and the same thing, and having paused by the wayside to point out the amazing versatility of the characters in reversing their sex, the pagan "fairy grandmother" being easily identifiable with the Scriptural Satan, tempting the flesh, and the stepmother and two sisters with the three chiding friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar; and having touched lightly upon the moot point of the pronunciation of the name Cinderella, whether with the hard guttural C (pronounced K as in kinemetograph), thus giving rise to the spectacular but as yet unproved theory of Katzenbach that the word originated in the German "kinder," meaning "child," in which case it could have only the most dull and innocent interpretation, or with the soft sibilant C (pronounced S as in sesquicentennial) and connoting the much more significant idea of SIN, preferable for the writer's purposes,** we come finally to the nineteenth and last psychophysical parallelism inherent in the allegory itself, viz.: the moral significance of the use of silicate of potash, soda, lime, magnesia, alumina, and lead as the substance of which the slipper was made,*** and the amazing bearing which this fact may have in determining the geographical locality, not to say nationality of the original Cinderella, raising, as it does, the obvious possibility, nay, probability of a Chinese or Oriental influence, since no female foot could have conformed to the dimensions quoted in the myth unless it had been bound from infancy, or had perhaps been actually the foot of a child, and not an adult, which would further substantiate the Oriental hypothesis, dear Mother India being famous for her celebration of the child marriage.

DINAH STEVENS.

Our Ph.D. Thesis had to pretend to be dull: but there is dulness and dulness, one the kind that merely bores wherever we find it, and the other the brand of Miss Bates and Mr. Collins of which there is too much in life, but in literature, outside the pages of Shakespeare, Dickens, and Jane Austen, all too little. I was not altogether disappointed in my hope that some of this week's entries might have a saving touch of the second kind. Nevertheless, too many offerings lacked that touch in spite of the wild theories advanced. Religious and political allegories led the field, though there were a few impressively improbable historical interpretations like that of Dorothy Jay, which, for the sake of a glass slipper, shed light on a strike of the Cobblers' Trade Union in the reign of a certain King Bulbul.

Homer Parsons's candidate was much too intelligent and aware of the contemporary world, and Alice B. Hunter might have taken the prize if we had asked for a children's bedtime interpretation by a Victorian maiden aunt with an interest in dietetics. John R. Swain, more ingenious than these, provided an acrostic from the "Færie Queene" obtained by "starting with the first line of Book III, Canto v, stanza 16, and reading each line at the beginning or ending of a stanza whose initial letters will spell in order the name "Cinderella"; the result is held to be a compliment to Queen Elizabeth and a reference to the discovery of tobacco.

But the three best entries were by David Heathestone, George Boas, and Dinah Stevens. The last takes the prize because she conforms in more than spirit to the popular conception of a Ph.D. Thesis; her entire excerpt (saving the footnotes—and the pun in the second nearly cost her the prize) is contained in a single sentence of admirable punctuation. George Boas offered a Marxian interpretation of the allegory, and David Heathestone deserves special praise for his treatment of the pumpkin, as follows:

*A vestigial remnant of the pumpkin's ancient association with magic is found in its present-day use for making jack-o'-lanterns on Hallowe'en. This device could be constructed from a squash or a cucumber. But a statistical survey extending over a ten-year period indicated that only a half of one per cent of the Jack-o'-lanterns made in the rural districts of North America have been of other material than pumpkin. Since, as described in Part I, folk tales have their foundations in the most fundamental sociological subconsciousness, it might not have been as easy as would appear from a superficial glance for the carriage to have been created from anything but a pumpkin. It will, in fact, now be shown to have been impossible. . . .*

*But even though the pumpkin was an inevitable choice, it remains a vegetable, and as such represents the product of toil in the earth. As all carriages are ultimately derived from such toil, and particularly as the carriages of ancient princes were usually derived from agricultural, peasant toil, the transformation of the pumpkin into the carriage by a touch of a wand is only a temporal acceleration of the economic process. While it is legitimate to view the parallel as allegorical, the two processes are really, almost, identical.*

## RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature,* 25 West 45th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

* Job:2:8; ibid: 42:6.

** vide popular slogan, circa 1912: "I'm the guy who put the Sin in Cinderella." Occasionally, *'ell* may have been substituted for *sin.*

*** expanding power of "glass" being only .0002714 under pressure of average foot with possible variation of .00027113 in the event of juxtaposition or superimposition of another's foot as might have transpired in the process of the dance.

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# The Reader's Guide

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*

*M. L. S., New York, asks for a list of compilations and anthologies of aphorisms, maxims, proverbs, and quotations besides Bartlett, the "Wisdom" series edited by Bryan Brown for Brentano's, and Logan Persall Smith's "Treasury of English Aphorisms," with which he is already provided.*

ARE you prepared with plenty of shelf-room? For you are about to have an avalanche of titles descend upon you; I could fill the rest of this page with just the names of such volumes. For my own part, I hold by J. K. Hoyt's "New Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations" (Funk & Wagnalls), and if the desired citation is not to be found there, or in the latest edition of "Bartlett's Familiar Quotations" (Little, Brown), someone else may have the job of looking it up. I was glad to see that the shelf in the reading-room of the British Museum devoted to this purpose had these two books in the place of honor. But if you are really making a collection of such anthologies and cyclopedias, it must include "The World's Best Epigrams" (Doran), "Dictionary of Quotations from Ancient and Modern English and Foreign Sources" (Warne, $4), "Dictionary of Foreign Phrases and Classical Quotations" (Standard Book Co., $4.50), "Proverbs, Maxims, and Phrases of All Ages" (Putnam, $5), "The World's Best Proverbs and Maxims" (McKay, 50 cents), "Curiosities in Proverbs," edited by D. E. Marvin (Putnam), author of "The Antiquity of Proverbs" (Putnam, $2.50); "Dictionary of Classified Quotations from Authors of All Nationalities and Periods" (Crowell, $5), "Putnam's Complete Book of Quotations, Proverbs, and Household Words" (Putnam, $6.50), "Unfamiliar Quotations" (Brimmer, $5), "Forty Thousand Quotations" (Sully, $5), "The World's Best Proverbs" (Laird, $1.50), "History's Most Famous Words" (Lothrop, $2.50), "A Fardel of Epigrams" (Oxford University Press, $1.50), "1001 Epigrams," published by the Roycrofters at ten dollars; Benham's "Book of Quotations, Proverbs, and Household Words" (Lippincott, $3), and if I were you I would put in Frank Wilstach's "Dictionary of Similes" (Little, Brown), a book of its own kind and immensely interesting. If you are going in for sources as well, you must include the "Epigrammata" of Martial, "Poor Richard's Almanac," which comes in many forms but may as well be taken in the inexpensive "Evergreen Series" published by Houghton Mifflin, Khalil Gibran's "Sand and Foam" (Knopf), the aphorisms in Arthur Guiterman's "A Poet's Proverbs" (Harper), "A Century of Indian Epigrams," edited by Bhartrihari (Houghton Mifflin), the "Epigrams and Aphorisms" of Oscar Wilde (Luce), "Proverbs of Alfred the Great" (Oxford University Press), Skeat's "Early English Proverbs" (Oxford University Press)' and "Elizabethan Proverb Lore," by M. P. Tilley (Macmillan), showing Shakespearean parallels for the proverbs in Lyly's "Euphues" and the "Petite Palace" of Pettie.

IF a letter from Frances Edge McIlvaine, of the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Weeders Garden Club, had reached me while I was in New York, I would have taken the first train for Philadelphia. For a book show went on there, from May tenth to the first of July, an exhibition of "Herbals and Early Botanical Works," whose very names and descriptions as set down in the catalogue make my heart glad. Herbals are the fine flower of book-making, and the gathering of them into collections should never be permitted to mere bibliophiles; these treasures should be owned by gardeners alone, and where better than in Philadelphia, "Mother of Gardens" in America? The correspondent goes on: "There were such a surprising number of these precious old books in our libraries that it was quite thrilling to get them out, blow off the dust, and present them to our people, some three thousand of them." The catalogue is a little treasure in itself; it has a facsimile of the title-page of "Gerard's Herbal," John Bartram's book-plate, and descriptive notes for each item of unusual fulness and charm.

Oh, well, if I cannot see these books, I have at least seen some of the gardens they describe. Just up the road and around the corner from the Summer headquarters of this department is the old "Chelsea Physick Garden" established in 1676; you can see it a-growing and a-blowing just beyond the open iron railing. Here are grown the "Trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers" catalogued by Philip Miller in Item 37 of this collection, and it was to Sir Hans Sloane, who gave the ground for this Physick Garden, that Miller dedicated his famous "Gardener's Dictionary," also in the show. Up the Thames is Kew Gardens, described in the "Hortus Kewensis" of William Aiton, 1789, and to my mind the loveliest public garden to be found even in the blossoming island, England. For it does blossom. I have walked for miles together in the South of England and passed innumerable cottages, but never have I passed one that was not blazing with flowers; along streets in London, where life is a long fight with grime, you come continually upon unexpected outbursts of beauty, window-boxes trailing sprays of nasturtium, fuchsia, candytuft; and this bright blue flower that in Germany they call *männertreue*, for they say it keeps your husband at home. Yes, and when in early August the strange, sweet cry of the lavender seller rings through London streets, everyone comes crowding to the window and listens raptly, and the singer's stock goes in no time. You buy flowers here as you do bread, and every string-bag crowded with summer cabbage comes home crowned with a threepenny cluster of bloom. So it was in Nuremberg, where I went to market so early one July morning this year that I met the marketwomen coming out of early mass at the Liebfrauenkirche, and where every housewife was buying a bunch of flowers as regularly as she invested in beans or butter. So it was in thrifty Scotland, where everyone was investing in heather for luck, and watching with charmed eyes to motions, in the gardens on Prince Street, Edinburgh, of a flower-clock that actually told the time, midway of what I do believe is the last example of floral carpets left in Britain outside of Hampton Court. What comes over all these people when they come to live in America? We "say it with flowers" at the rate of radiograms; but we evidently don't love them so well we cannot live without them—and our immigrants seem to leave their love of flowers behind when they come to the States.

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Three uniformed policemen invaded our Sales Department early this morning . . . and struck dismay into the Personnel until it was discovered they were on a mission of peace. . . . In fact, they had come *en masse* to buy a copy of J. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Labor's Man of Destiny by *H. Hessel Tiltman!* . . . Judging from the orders—and a large new edition just off press—everybody's reading this fine, complete, authorized biography . . . carrying MacDonald up to the very moment of sailing for this country. . . . *Fully illustrated.* ($5.00)

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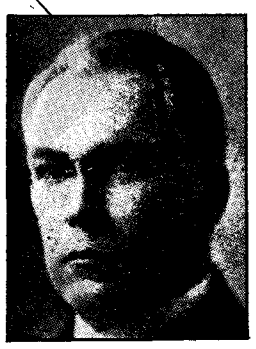

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## From the Scholartis Press

THE Scholartis Press, London, has published Richard H. Horne's epic poem, "Orion," in an edition of 650 copies, with fifty more on hand-made paper. The text followed is that of the first (1845) edition, with full collation from the ninth (1872). There is an introduction by Eric Partridge.

The book has been printed at the Cambridge University Press, the introduction set in Treyford roman, the text in Treyford italic, the latter's first appearance. Both faces are by Graily Hewitt. The roman seems to me a very distinguished face, as would be expected from its designer, but the italic, reminding one too much of the late unlamented Cheltenham type, does not seem so pleasing. It is rather monotonous, with only the f, g, and y to give it character. The roman, a type of marked individuality, is nevertheless extremely readable; the italic is much less so—a fault which seems to be inherent in italic when used as text letter. It seems to me that the effect would have been bettered by setting in the roman throughout.

The same critical objection, though in a lesser degree, may be made to "Poetical Sketches by William Blake, with an Essay on Blake's Metric by Jack Lindsay." Here the strong, black impression of the Garamond roman is good; there is too much italic, and it makes for a spotty page and one difficult to read. R.

## About Colophons

ONE of my correspondents, catching at a parenthetical remark of mine recently about the silliness of naming, in the colophon, the type in which a book is printed, asks me *why* I think it is silly. I think it is silly

*Because* no reader really cares a hoot what the type face is so long as it is big and readable;

*Because* the names of type faces are delusive. Many a book is stated to be set in "Caslon" without qualification—and there are dozens of so-called "Caslon" faces;

*Because* when the point size is added in the descriptive notice, the confusion grows. All printers, a few readers, and no psychologists know that the point measurement applies only to the *body* of the type, and not to the *face;*

*Because* the naming of the type is purely and solely a "selling point," aimed at the buyer's vanity;

*Because* the colophon is not an office record of all the details which went into the production of the book. If one has the humorous gift which the late Bert Leston Taylor possessed, one may create a "Biliousstine," in the printing of which the colophon states that "even the press was trod by hand." Otherwise it may be as well to refrain from giving free advertising to the paper merchant, the edition binder, the man who cast the rollers, and the provenience of the pressman's pants.

## The Paper Books

THE first issue of The Paper Books is at hand, "The Golden Wind," by Takashi Ohta and Margaret Sperry. This venture is likely to attract much attention because in a period when book prices seem very high (although as a matter of fact they are not so high comparatively as most of the "necessities" of life), a well-printed book selling for fifty or seventy-five cents is an anomaly. And the volume before us is well printed. It is a twelve-mo, though seeming to be rather small because of the lack of overhanging covers. The type is a good, readable face of old style cut (marred by short "descenders"), and the presswork is well done. The paper is a thin, firm white. The binding—and this is what makes a difference in the price—is of paper, with the decorated end-leaves pasted down so as to reinforce the cover. This is a plan long followed in commercial catalogues, but not frequent in paper-covered books, whose chief defect has been the parting of cover and insides after a short handling. The decorations on end leaves and cover, by Rockwell Kent, are gay and attractive. The title-page is well handled, and all through there is restraint in design which gives the book a welcome stability of character. The design and workmanship is such that the book will stand well on the shelf, without the dissolute look of the ordinary paper book after the first reading! It seems to me that Mr. Boni and his advisers have made a good start. R.

## On the River "Amour"

WHALL shall be said of a book dedicated to "Mamma, to the Virgin Mary, and to General Bonaparte," and which has a pun for a title? What is one's first impression of a book bound in black oilcloth? Joseph Delteil's "On the River Amour," translated by Samuel Putnam, and issued by Covici-Friede, is the book in question. It almost becomes interesting in its attempt to be "modern," but in spite of interesting attempts, it doesn't quite get there. As a story it has its points for those who are interested in highly seasoned books. The pictures are of the all too usual type of "modern" drawing, which means that they display neither sense, drawing, nor interest.

## In Honor of Gutenberg

THE historical importance of Mainz and of John Gutenberg increases as the work of the press spreads. It may interest some readers who did not chance to see a small booklet issued some months ago by the Gutenberg Gesellschaft, as well as those who are not aware of the work being carried forward at Mainz, to summarize the information therein. The work takes two forms, that of the Museum and of the Gutenberg Society's publications.

The Museum (to quote freely from the pamphlet) was founded in 1900 to give a general view of the history of printing from the beginning to the present. The Museum in the city library houses an exhibition of printing from the earliest times to date, a reconstruction of Gutenberg's workroom, and a permanent exhibition of the work of German type-foundries. In addition, the city has recently given the Museum two old houses, one of which contains souvenirs of the festival of 1900 and a display of modern advertising. The aim of the Gutenberg Museum is to become the world's printing museum.

The Gutenberg Society, with headquarters at the Museum, is an international union of individuals, institutions, and business firms to encourage research into the invention of the art of printing and its artistic and technical development to the present day. It aims to support and finance the Museum. It issues a yearbook of some 300 pages, containing contributions on all phases of book printing from Gutenberg to the present time. In addition it issues an annual report and occasional booklets. These publications are free to members—the membership fee being $4 a year. Yearbooks for 1926, 1927, and 1928 have already been printed, as well as several other volumes of importance in the history of printing. The list of contributors to these publications embraces many well-known authorities on printing. R.

## Symbolum Apostolicum

THE earliest known block book printed in colors is in the National Library at Vienna. It was printed on vellum, and was found bound into a Psalter of 1468 as illustrations. The leaves were pasted into the Psalter after it had been bound. These leaves have been taken from the Psalter and collated and bound as a separate book. It is supposed to have been printed about 1452. This block book has now been reproduced in color and issued by the Pegasus Press in an edition of 150 copies. There is an introduction, in separate brochure, written by Dr. Ottmar Smital of Vienna.

The major interest of this work is of course concerned with the color reproductions. There are ten pages in the block book, measuring about 5½x7¼ inches. The process used is "colored collotype" and the printing is by Bruckmann. As I have never seen the original, I do not know how faith-

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fully the collotype reproduces its colors: it seems likely, however, that while the colors are faithfully reproduced, and the general effect is very soft and pleasant, that the semblance to the original in the appearance of the cameo-printed black letters and lines is lost. Nevertheless such a reproduction of a unique item is of great value. R.

## Monograph on W. F. Hopson

MR. GEORGE DUDLEY SEYMOUR has sent me a copy of his essay, contributed to the Year Book of the American Society of Bookplate Collectors (1928), on "William F. Hopson and His Bookplates." Besides being the enthusiastic appreciation by a friend, it is a short but informed biography of one of the few surviving American wood engravers. A valuable addition is a list of 201 bookplates cut on wood or etched on copper by Mr. Hopson, beginning with the 1892 plate for himself. R.

## Auction Sales Calendar

American Art Association. October 29—Library of the late Mrs. Carlisle Norwood. Sets of standard authors, with occasional items like Hardy's "Woodlanders," London, 1887, and the first issue of the first edition of Kipling's "Story of the Gadsbys" (1888).

October 30—American autographs from the collection of Gertrude Emerson; American and Foreign Autographs from the collection of John M. Geddes. These include autographs of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, Presidents of the United States, and Revolutionary War heroes; an unusual collection of over five hundred letters from Bishops of the American Episcopal Church, commencing with Samuel Seabury and William White, and coming down to Bishop Potter and Bishop Doane; Marie de Medici, Mme. de Maintenon, and other French names; the Duchess of Portsmouth on the subject of Charles II; David Hume; Richard Brinsley Sheridan; the Duke of Wellington; and two letters of Horace Walpole's, one concerning itself with Voltaire and the other with Mrs. Pope's appearance as "Hortensia" in a dramatic version of the "Castle of Otranto."

November 6—Library of the late John C. Williams, Part I. Americana.

November 6 (evening)—November 8—Library of the late John C. Williams, Part II. English literature chiefly of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a welcome relief from the customary sales.

Charles F. Heartman, Metuchen, N. J. November 9—Rare Americana. This sale includes Revolutionary tracts with more autographs of important Americans of the period; Jefferson Davis's "Address to the People," 1863; John Cotton's "The Bloudy Tenent, Washed, and Made White," London, 1647; Robert Harcourt's "Relation of a Voyage to Guiana," London, 1613; several rare Indian Captivities, including "A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, a Minister's Wife in New-England," London, 1682, with a sermon by her husband—"Of the Possibility of God's Forsaking a People that have been near and dear to him"—added; Increase Mather's "Brief Relation of the State of New England," London, 1689; Nathaniel Morton's "New England Memorial," Boston, 1721; Albert Vespucius's "Von der new gefunde Region," Gedrucks zu Nurenberg durch Wolffgang Hueber, 1505; a long letter from Lord Tennyson to James T. Fields; William Wood's "New England's Prospect: a true, lively, and experimental description of that part of America," London, 1639. G. M. T.

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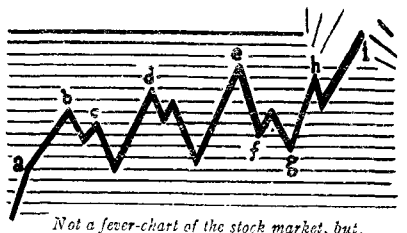


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To *The Inner Sanctum's* blue-ribbon collection of "perfect tributes" goes this letter on *The Psychology of Happiness* from A. E. WIGGAM, author of *The New Decalogue of Science:*

*It's my fifty-eighth birthday and I wish I had had* PROFESSOR PITKIN'S *book on happiness as a birthday present when I was about fifteen or eighteen: I am sure I would all these years have been a happier man, although as it is I've had a mighty good time. But, had I understood the psychology of happiness as* PROFESSOR PITKIN *has so clearly and interestingly developed it, I think I might have had a whale of a time. He makes it easy to be happy—almost easy, anyhow, something we can all achieve if we go at it in the right way. People need this book, millions of them, and I hope they will buy it.*

This is not a solitary apostrophe, but one of an overflowing sheaf of eulogies. Professor James Harvey Robinson finds The Psychology of Happiness positively exciting. . . . *The New York Sun* calls it more fascinating than a novel. . . . WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE enjoyed it tremendously. . . . ISAAC GOLDBERG urges the populace to rush out and buy it. . . . GAMLALIEL BRADFORD pronounces it sound and stimulating. . . . EVERETT DEAN MARTIN also finds it fascinating. . . . *The Book of the Month Club News* calls it very informative, very helpful, very interesting. . . .

*The Psychology of Happiness* has already reached the best-seller stage, according to a not-unexpected communique just received from *Brentano's*. It ranks sixth on the non-fiction list.

That is just the way *The Cross Word Puzzle Books*, *The Story of Philosophy*, *Trader Horn*, *The Art of Thinking*, *The Cradle of the Deep*, *Believe It or Not* and other books "*more exciting than fiction—and selling faster*" made their historic first flights to the rarified bookstore heights—sixth place at Brentano's, the first rung on the ladder to world-wide renown.

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"THANK God we're still alive!" exclaims *Ives Washburn* heartily and asks us to the Second Birthday Party of his firm, which, by the time you read this, will be several days past. We have thought of a blank verse poem on publishing which might begin, "From year to year small publishers thank God—" Still, it's the small publishers that have a lot of the fun. At least it's the editorial department of a small firm that has a lot of the fun. It's the business end that gets white hair and nightmares. . . .

All of which reminds us of an article on publishing by *Frank Swinnerton* which we recently read in the *English Fortnightly Review*. A sage analysis by a veteran. Some thing else that we read recently by *Dale Warren* of Houghton Mifflin, in *The Publishers' Weekly*, struck us as quite cogent also. He wrote on "Why Authors Leave Home,"—in other words, why they change publishers. . . .

We have heard that the late *Henry Holt* was of the opinion that no royalty should be paid to an author until the publisher had recovered the money he had spent on a book. Fancy that today! This is the day of the large advance against royalty,—as large as you can get,—a short-sighted policy on the part of authors, it seems to us. For the advance is deducted from what they get later on on what their book earns. But theirs is a cash-in-hand feeling. And yet how many authors do we know who have spent a good deal of what their book will earn for them before it is even on the market. By that time, therefore, they take but a jaundiced interest in it—save for the press notices. And it gives them a feeling, if the book goes well, that somehow their publisher is withholding from them all the emolument they should receive. For when money is spent you so easily forget about it. . . .

On October 20th *John Dewey* was seventy years old. Some months ago a National Committee was formed to honor him. His birthday was therefore celebrated by speakers of national standing delivering addresses on the contribution to thought and progress which Professor Dewey has made in more than forty years of productive scholarship and public distinction in education, philosophy, and general social welfare. It is a large contribution. Hereby consider us as laying our own wreath at his feet. . . .

Miss *Harriet Monroe of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, has recently awarded over a thousand dollars in prizes to poets—mere poets! Her annual November number lists these prizes and their winners. Imprimis a $250 prize was offered for a Peace Poem. The jury was composed of *Padraic Colum*, *Witter Bynner*, *Malcolm Cowley*, and *Sara Teasdale*. They chose "The Unknown Soldier" by *Charles Wagner* of Brooklyn, which leads off the November issue of *Poetry*. . . .

*Marjorie Allen Seiffert* of Moline, Illinois, won the Helen Haire Levinson prize of $200. *H. Boner*, formerly of Colorado and Chicago, won the Guarantors' Prize of $100; *James J. Ryan* of Chicago the Young Poet's Prize for the same amount. The John Reed Memorial Prize went to *Archibald MacLeish*, the Friends of American Writers Prize to *Winifred Welles*, the Friday Club Prize to *Helen Hoyt*, and the Midland Authors Prize to *Gladys Campbell* of Chicago. These were all prizes of one hundred dollars. . . .

*George Bernard Shaw*, no less, has been defending *Katharine Mayo's* "Mother India," as he once defended *William Archer's* opinions on India. Harcourt has now published "After Mother India," a volume containing a mass of new material in which the author carefully examines, also, the principal criticisms that have been aimed at Miss Mayo. . . .

William Edwin Rudge represents the London *Studio* in this country. The firm sells a World's Masters series, including both old and modern Masters of Painting, in two categories: wrapper-bound, 40 cents per copy; clothbound, 75 cents per copy. Painters like *Daumier*, *Matisse*, *Goya*, *Gauguin*, *Picasso*, and *Von Gogh* will be represented later. The first eight titles to be published will include *Gainsborough*, *Rubens*, *Dürer*, *Velasquez*, *El Greco*, *Cézanne*, so you see the range of the series is catholic. Each volume will contain twenty-four photogravure reproductions. . . .

*Alfred Kreymborg's* lucky date is said to be October 25th, so yesterday his "Our Singing Strength: An Outline of American Poetry 1620-1930" was brought out by Coward-McCann. It was on October 25th, 1904, that Alfred gave up his job as a pianola pumper in a New York music store, moved into a Greenwich Village garret on West Fourteenth Street, and decided to become a writer. Also, October 25th is his wedding anniversary. As to his present book. This is the first history of *American* poetry to be published. A great part of the book is devoted to living poets. . . .

*Louis Grudin's* "A Primer of Æsthetics" is now finished and on the Covici-Friede list for next Spring. One of the chapters is an essay called "A Definition of Poetry." . . .

We hail and farewell *Elliot Holt* who has now given up publishing. Coward-McCann has acquired the four books he published. Elliot was just next door to us and we shall miss his cheerful and enthusiastic presence. . . .

*Edgar Wallace*, who writes a book in two weeks and does a play over the week-end, has just arrived on a visit to America. His detective stories sell more than five million copies a year in Europe and America. An anecdote told of him in his brownstone Portland Place mansion is that of his butler answering the 'phone. "I'm sorry, sir" (it is the butler's voice), "but I can't put you through. Mr. Wallace is finishing a new play and left word that he must not be disturbed. . . . What's that, sir? You'll hold the wire?." . . .

*Edwin Markham*, sometimes called the dean of American poets, and author of that classic burst, "The Man with The Hoe," was elected on his seventy-seventh birthday a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. . . .

*Floyd Dell* is at work for Farrar and Rinehart on a book to be called "Coming of Age in Western Civilization," which will be a study of sex *mores* in America. He is also busily enlarging his home at Croton-on-Hudson. . . .

*Julia Peterkin*, *Lewis Mumford*, and *Ernest Boyd* are judging the new Longmans' Novel Prize Contest, open to all authors who have never published a novel which has sold more than 5,000 copies. The prize will be awarded only to unpublished novels written in English, of between 40,000 and 125,000 words. Translations from foreign languages will not be eligible, nor novels that have appeared in magazine form. You should address Longmans, Green and Company for fuller information. All manuscript must be received by them by December first. . . .

Last Friday *Mr. and Mrs. John Farrar* gave a tea for *Mr. and Mrs. Hervey Allen*. Mr. Allen's new book of poems, "New Legends," will add to his reputation as a poet. He is also a biographer of *Poe* and a writer on the Great War. He is particularly interested in narrative poetry, an interest we have in common. . . .

We have received this week alone about twenty books that publishers expect us to read. If we only had our whole time for reading! As it is we have succeeded in finishing "How Like a God," by *Rex Stout*, and are now embarking upon "The Man Within," by *Graham Greene*. We found Mr. Stout's book quite powerful though extraordinarily depressing. But then most of the books we have read recently, whether published or in manuscript, have seemed to us to have a decidedly morbid tinge. Life doesn't amount to a hoot, according to most of the authors we encounter. Yet when we encounter again writers of our own generation that we saw through the same period in our own day, lo and behold, many of them are stout and ruddy and ready to laugh a good deal. It all depends, we suppose, upon what you expect of life, and what complexes you have. That isn't always so. Some people seem to be bludgeoned by sheer chance much more than others. Some seem fated. But, by and large, as a friend of ours is fond of saying, there come as many ha'pence as kicks in the long run. If it's an even break, we suppose that's about as much as you can expect. One keeps busy,—that is, fairly busy,—and that is about all one can do. . . .

But also, as *Crosby's* "Skippy" remarks, "God certainly does bat out some elegant scenery," elegant spiritual scenery also,—elegant people we like to think about. So before we go any more pollyanna we shall close this instalment. THE PHOENICIAN.

# *The* AMEN CORNER

Mr. Harry Hansen recently praised a book for exhibiting "that fine use of a broad culture which is possible only in the books of a philosopher." He went on to say that "the mannered book, in which prose has a melody of its own, and style is a consideration, comes to us rarely. . . ." and "is a pleasant reminder that once authors demanded more of the reader than a set of nerves." Those of us who read possibly too many new books on commuters' trains, in the subway, and even in the barber's chair can sympathize both with Mr. Hansen's enthusiasm and with his complaint that there are not many such. However, our acquaintance with the library of the Oxford University Press, (at 114 Fifth Avenue, New York), has revealed some recent books that carry on this high tradition of style and broad culture.

Just a week ago Mr. Byrne Hackett of the Brick Row Book Shop on Fiftieth Street was declaring to us that R. W. Chapman's *Portrait of a Scholar*[1] was surely one of the finest pieces of prose written in our time. Its rhythmic sentences, its innate dignity and charm, its range of scholarly allusion may well bring the coming generation to consider it a classic of our day. But how unlike it is to our more fecund gibberish, born of the typewriter and the telephone! We should like to have someone who has studied such things inform us just how much our present day style is influenced by the necessity of composing at the typewriter. We cannot but picture ourselves as new primitives of the machine age. But we are blessed with the leaven of research.

The Atlantic Bookshelf last month told of "one of the young men who writes advertising for one of the book clubs leaving his office after a day of hectic copy writing. He paused in the door of the next adjoining cell where another youth was busy with an extremely modern layout for an extremely modern book.

'What are you reading?' he asked; meaning at home, for his own diversion.

'*The Upanishads*,'[2] was the answer, 'and you?'

'*Tom Jones*.'

I personally vouch for the truth of that little narrative; let Mr. Ripley include it in his next edition of 'Believe It or Not' if he will. While the great reading public is being convinced of the merits of the latest club, guild, or league, the chaps who concoct the convincing arguments are spending their 'spare time at home' with the *Sacred Books of the East*[3] and Henry Fielding."

"That fine use of a broad culture," to return to Mr. Hansen's lament, is the very marrow of such books as Señor de Madariaga's *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards*[4], Alfred Zimmern's *America and Europe*[5], Aldrich's *Musical Discourse*[6], and S. E. Morison's *History of the United States*[7].

*The Lamp and the Lute*[8] by Bonamy Dobrée follows the same high tradition of fine workmanship and interest in the studies of T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Hardy, Kipling, E. M. Forster, and Ibsen. And Benedetto Croce's *History of Italy*[9] crowns this tradition with a rare perspective and sagelike magnanimity.

We wish we could quote in full here the page of praise our worthy neighbor, Mr. Benét, gave to H. W. Garrod's *Profession of Poetry*[10]. We agree with Mr. Benét that "Garrod's volume means most to us not as the presentation of a pantheon, but for scholarship freshened by enthusiasm and enlivened often by dryly humorous phrase" and that "this is the most stimulating essay on Housman we have ever read."

To those who, unlike ourself, "no longer believe in human dignity" and "see the soul of man as commonplace and its adventures as mean" we recommend a reading of Charles Williams's vital and poetic *Myth of Shakespeare*[11]. Robert Bridges has said of Williams that "he is by far the most interesting of the younger English poets." Surely he has unusual substance and his richness of feeling is not diminished by the faulty expression that clouds the verses of more popular poets.

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# The New Books

## Religion

(*Continued from page 320*)

ends, the combined genius of Catholicism and Protestantism is necessary. There must be more and better instruction in the churches. There must be a revival of mysticism, and, as a corollary, of prayer. Such a spiritual uprising as might come through a clearer conception of the world's need and of Christ's will for the unity of the Church, would save Christianity for the world. Such, in substance, is the argument of the book. It is a timely challenge to the Christian Church.

## Travel

TRAVELS IN THE CONGO. By ANDRÉ GIDE. Translated from the French by DOROTHY BUSSY. Knopf. 1929. $5.

In picking out André Gide to accompany a commission sent to investigate administrative conditions in French possessions in Africa, the French Government paid a deserved tribute to his extraordinary powers of observation and to his equally great gift of sympathetically understanding what he sees. His "Travels in the Congo," which has probably served as his report to the French Government, takes the form of an intermittently kept journal.

Gide often forgets the jungle round him in meditations far removed from any it inspired. Their interspersion through the journal is rather distracting to those intent on following the route of the commission, though to others they will doubtless add value to the volume. As a whole, it is not a particularly absorbing travel work, especially to those familiar with the vivid and comprehensive records of the Citroën Expedition and the works of many who have visited the same region. The negligent languor of an invalid shows itself in the pages describing the way to the French colony, and much space is devoted to matters of administration there which are of less interest to American than to French readers. The best of the volume is what Gide has to say of the psychology of the natives, of their dances, songs, and rituals. The book is abundantly supplied with pictures.

LIVING EAST. By DAVID WOOSTER KING. Duffield. 1929. $2.50.

An account of a motor trip of five hundred miles through Afghanistan to Kabul, with the noted lecturer Lowell Thomas, to interview Amanullah, recently Amir of Afghanistan, is the unusual feature of this attractively written book. The sketches of the life of an American in the jute business in India are accurate and vivid, and give glimpses of a side of Indian life quite different from those described in the usual volumes of propagandists, travellers, and novelists.

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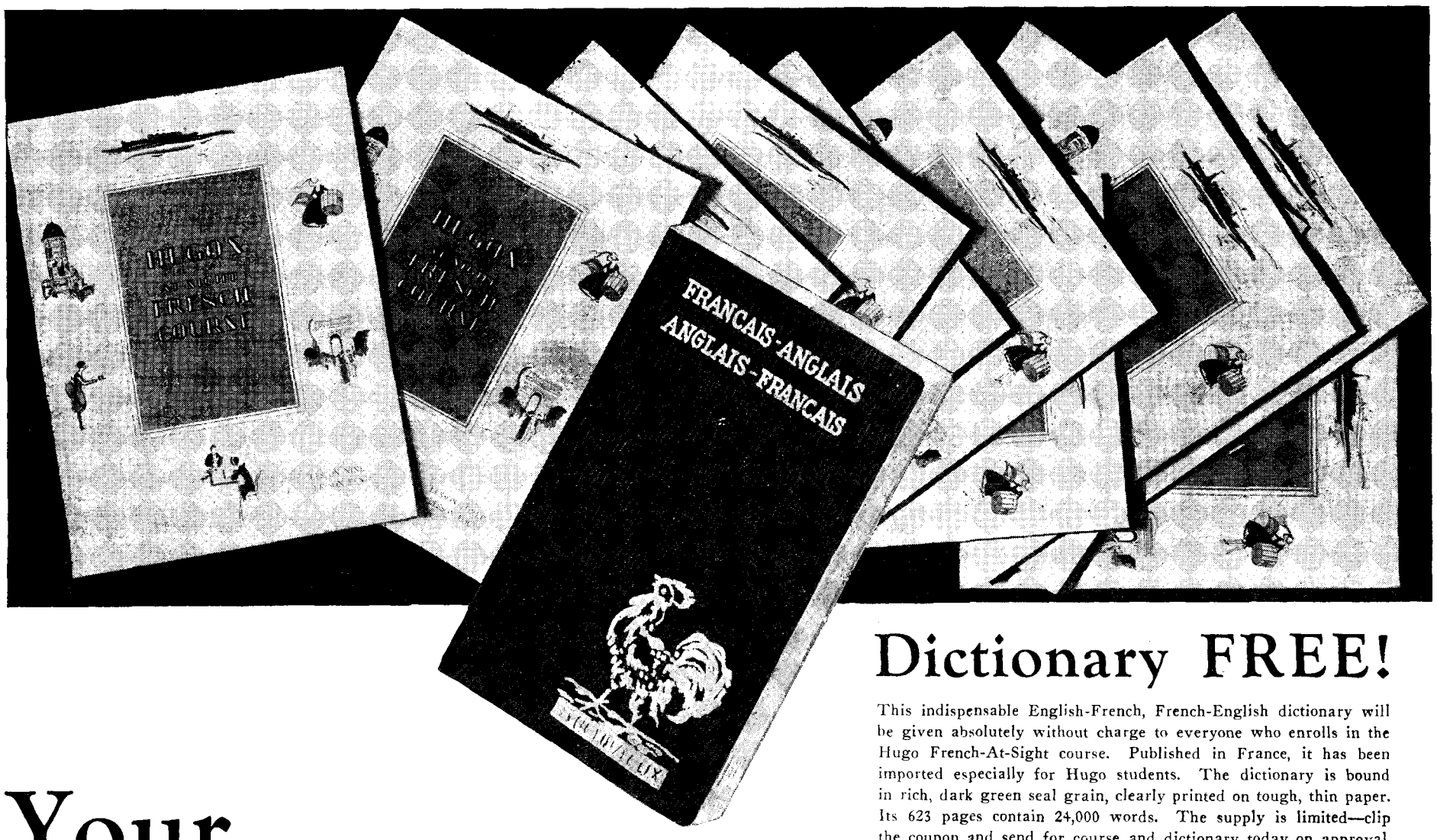


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parlez ..... par-lay
(*speak*)

bouquet ..... boo-kay
(*a bunch of flowers*)

beaucoup ..... bow-koo
(*much, many*)

l'édifice ..... laidifees
(*the building*)

mais oui.....may we
(*but, yes*)

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